THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE CHURCH

A Book of Essays

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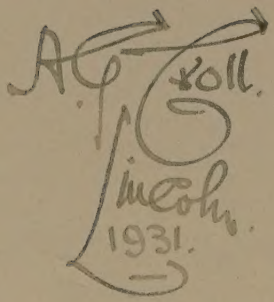

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For the statements made in each essay in this book the writer of that essay is alone responsible

FOREWORD

By his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury

I HAVE been asked to write a foreword to this book of essays. I do so willingly in the hope that it may increase among churchpeople their knowledge of the history and constitution of the Church Assembly, their interest in its work, and their faith in the ideals for which it stands. The responsibility for what is said in each essay rests with its author. I do not agree with all the statements made or opinions expressed; but the freedom and variety of the essays will make them the more educative and interesting.

There is, I think, need for such a book as this. For old and accustomed habits of thinking and working are very enduring in a body so long established as the Church of England; and many of its members have as yet scarcely understood the significance of their Church Assembly. They do not realise that to the laity of this generation has been given a share in the government of their Church such as has never been given to any previous generation in its long history, and that the Church now possesses a representative assembly with its own legislative and deliberative functions recognised as part of the constitution of this Church and Realm. The Assembly has come to stay. Its place may become even more important in the future. There may be changes in its methods of election and in the scope of its work. But these changes will be made in the body which now exists. It is therefore most important that

churchpeople should be well-informed about an institution which must henceforth be a permanent factor in the life of the Church.

We have every reason to be thankful for the beginning it has made and for the work it has already done. If it has made some mistakes—I think they have been very few—this is only to say that it is human and alive. The record of the legislation it has already achieved is most striking. The Assembly is acquiring a character and spirit of its own. I have been present at all but three of its meetings, and I have been impressed by the large and regular attendance of its members, by the efficiency with which, in spite of many difficulties, they carry through their business, by the high level of their debates, and most of all by the spirit of fairness, forbearance and goodwill which they show. If we criticise or dislike this or that Act of Parliament we do not, if we are sensible, belittle the place of Parliament itself in our English life. It would be foolish, because some of us may criticise the Measures of the Assembly, to belittle its own place in the life of the Church. We have rather to welcome it, to make the best and the most of it, and to set and keep a high ideal before it.

Hitherto it has been mainly occupied by legislative business. This was inevitable, for the impotence of Parliament had allowed arrears of much-needed reform to accumulate. It may be well that there should now be some pause in this legislative activity, and that fuller chance should be given to educate and to express the mind of the Church on the spiritual and social work entrusted to it in this land and across the seas. Let it be our hope and

prayer that the Assembly may be ever vigilant to put things right that are wrong in the Church's life, and ever eager to uphold the standard and to set forward the Kingdom of Christ the Lord. If this ideal is to be fulfilled the Assembly must have behind it and around it the interest and the loyalty of all the members of the Church. In the hope that this book may in some measure serve this end I commend it to my fellow Churchmen.

COSMO CANTUAR:

I. THE PLACE OF THE ASSEMBLY IN THE CHURCH'S LIFE

SYNOPSIS

TWO groups in support of Enabling Bill of 1919—One looked for a change of machinery only—The other hoped that an access of vitality would accrue to the Church—Arrears of legislation the immediate task of the Assembly—Lack of time for other than legislative interests—Influence of the Assembly on the spiritual life of the Church conspicuous in the quickening of missionary zeal and fostering of internal unity—Work of the Missionary Council—Effect of the World Call Reports—In gatherings of Churchmen which only resemble debating societies emphasis is laid on differences—In the Assembly, where the vote is effective, all parties are under the discipline of responsibility—Church of England brought near to unity in support of 1927 Prayer Book—Unifying influences have spread through the Church—The Assembly has engendered enthusiasm among the laity, and added to the administrative efficiency of the Church—Danger that men will take the Assembly debates as representing the chief concerns of the Church—The Assembly not yet effective as the mouthpiece of the Christian conscience—Its statutory powers give weight to its opinions even when they have no legal force—Potentially it is the focus of the mind and judgment of the Church of England.

I

THE PLACE OF THE ASSEMBLY IN THE CHURCH'S LIFE

By the Archbishop of York

DURING the period between the publication of the *Report on the Relations of Church and State* in 1916 and the passing of the *National Assembly of the Church of England* (*Powers*) *Act*, 1919, there were discernible two distinct groups among the supporters of the policy outlined in the one and implemented in the other. One group represented the change proposed as very slight, a change of machinery only; they hoped great things in the way of added efficiency and accelerated reform, but they did not regard the proposals which they supported as involving any far-reaching modification either of what is called the Establishment of the Church or of the activities of the Church itself. The other group, while sharing the hope of administrative reform, also anticipated that, through the Assembly and the new responsibilities thrown on to the local representative bodies, an access of vitality would accrue to the Church as a whole.

The divergence between these two led, as such differences among colleagues always do, to some exaggeration of the points on which they differed. The arguments of the " minimisers " were indeed scarcely affected. Their case was a plain one and easy to state. The Church had presented to Parliament a great many Bills designed to reform

abuses or to bring machinery up to date; with very few exceptions these had failed to pass into law, not because Parliament was hostile, but because it lacked the necessary time for dealing with them. The new machinery would obviate that difficulty, and secure that the process of reform would go steadily forward. And that was the whole case—quite sufficient for the enactment of the necessary Enabling Bill, and unembarrassed by any uncertainty of outline.

The other group entertained hopes which, from the nature of the case, could not be defined. If an access of vitality is anticipated, no one will say in advance just how much effect is to be looked for. But partly, perhaps, in reaction from the modesty of the case presented by the other group, these supporters of the Enabling Bill drew very glowing pictures of what might be anticipated as the indirect effects of the new machinery. I do not see any reason to think they were mistaken, unless they gave the suggestion that these results would follow from the new arrangements within a few years. But there may have been some hope kindled that directly spiritual results would follow, which could in fact only spring from other causes when the hindrance of obsolete machinery was removed; and there may have been an expectation that the Assembly would become the focus of the whole life of the Church in a fashion which is not possible to a body meeting for less than three weeks in the year.

The immediate task of the Assembly was to deal with arrears of legislation. This it has done steadily through the ten years of its existence. In

my judgment it has done its work extremely well, to the great benefit of the Church. I think it is true that in some respects it forced the pace and thereby involved hardship for many clergy. That is deeply to be regretted; but it is also easy to understand that, since there was much legislation already thought out, and some of it even drafted, as the account of our attempts to legislate through Parliament alone has made clear, the coming of the opportunity led to a spate of Measures. If such mistakes have occurred, as I think they have, the Assembly learns like the rest of us by experience and is finding the way to adjust its action to the whole situation.

The same cause which has exposed the Assembly to criticism on that score has also prevented it from giving much attention to other than legislative interests. There have been many debates on education, and on other subjects of first-rate importance. But there has not been the opportunity to form, in the Assembly, a general mind with reference to any whole range of interest, except perhaps the revision of the Prayer Book. It would have been advantageous if either of the two sessions next after the publication of the recent Report on Religious Education could have been devoted exclusively to that Report. Time has not allowed this. On each occasion one whole day has been allotted to the subject, and we are to proceed with its various recommendations piecemeal. It could not be helped, for, even as it is, there is a glut of legislative business initiated but not completed. All of this is necessarily incidental to the first years of work under the new scheme; in another

ten years or so the leeway will have been made up, and the Assembly will have more time for other than purely legislative business. Till then the anticipations of the " minimisers " are likely to seem the more correct ; but after that, and, indeed, increasingly from the beginning, I believe that the other group referred to will prove to have been justified.

Already, indeed, the Assembly has had great influence on the spiritual life of the Church in various directions, of which two are to my mind specially conspicuous—the quickening of missionary zeal, and the fostering of internal unity.

The Assembly was able to give to its Missionary Council a degree of authority which it is inconceivable that its precursor, the Central Board of Missions, should ever have enjoyed. Through that Council the various missionary agencies and activities of the Church have been brought together more effectively than before. The survey of the world and its needs set out in the " World Call Reports " was thereby made possible. At a period of great industrial depression it is not surprising that the increase in contributions to missionary work received in the first year of the " World Call " has not been maintained ; there can be little doubt that, but for the World Call, there would have been a serious falling off. But, urgently needed as financial support certainly is, the success or failure of that effort must not be measured by that standard alone. There has been a vast increase in the extent of missionary knowledge and an equal quickening of concern for the missionary cause in the parishes all over the

country. The Assembly has not evoked this, but without the Assembly the means by which it has been evoked would not have existed.

Much more direct has been the influence of the Assembly in promoting Church unity. Before it was established by the Church and endowed with certain statutory powers by the State, the gatherings of Churchmen (except in Convocation, and to some extent even there) had the characteristic of debating societies ; that is to say, the discussion and the vote were all that happened. Nothing took place in the life of the Church as a result. This state of things inevitably leads to an emphasis on differences, because all that can be achieved is a victory for one side and a defeat for the other. Each side, therefore, struggles to secure a victory for its own principles, unhampered by any tiresome reflection that what it victoriously asserts will actually take place. In the Assembly it is not so. There the vote is effective. A decision reached alters the law—unless, of course, Parliament refuses its assent. All parties and members are under the discipline of responsibility. The aim is no longer to secure a victory in the debate, but to reach the decision most conducive to the Church's welfare ; no doubt the various parties often believe that this may best be served by their success in a division, but the difference in tone and temper is great and manifest, and leads to a disinclination on all sides to press partisan views to extremities. This became most apparent in the discussions on the Prayer Book. The Church of England has never in living memory, I believe, come so near to unity as in the support of the

Prayer Book Measure of 1927. The rejection of that Measure by Parliament, and still more the rejection of its successor in 1928, threw us back for the moment into the old atmosphere of the debating society—many groups seeking to gain, each what it could, from the new situation. But that is again passing away and the unifying influences are again at work.

It is by no means only in the Assembly that they are to be found. The fact that from the parish, through the diocese, to the National Assembly of the Church, there is a series of representative bodies, each with actual authority in its own sphere, has spread this tendency through the Church.

But there are other directions in which the influence of the Assembly upon the life of the Church can be traced. We have heard many criticisms of the House of Laity, based on the belief that it does not properly represent the mass of English Church people. What is quite certain is that a vastly greater number of lay people are taking an active part and interest in the affairs of the Church than ten years ago, and in most parts of the country the whole organisation, of which the Assembly is the crown, has called forth real enthusiasm among the laity. This is not only apparent in Parochial Church Councils and Diocesan Conferences, but also, and very remarkably, among those who are in positions of influence in political and civic life.

Again, there can be no question that the Church has gained greatly in administrative efficiency through the Assembly. It is open to very great

doubt whether what has been done for the Church Training Colleges could have been accomplished at all without the Assembly. Certainly the great training scheme for ex-service candidates for ordination, associated with the name of Knutsford, depended alike on its influence and on its budget. A very great amount of work in connection with the stipends of the clergy has been, and is still being, done through the Assembly, which could not otherwise have been undertaken. And this work is still incomplete, so that it must be judged rather by the tendencies which can already be observed than by the results actually achieved. No doubt the schemes of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners deserve the main credit for the improvement that has taken place ; but the Assembly has been able to gather together and publish in Reports the facts which ought to be known and appreciated by the Church in a way which the Commissioners could not undertake to follow. The happy co-operation of the two bodies is bearing abundant fruit, and this will become still more true as years go by and fresh methods of co-operation are suggested by growing experience.

The record of the Assembly needs no apology. But critics may well be reminded that it is still young. Ten years is only a short time in the life of the Church. To me, at least, it seems that the Assembly, with all it stands for, has been the means of quickening the Church's life to a degree quite as great as it was reasonable to hope, and the process is only just beginning.

A serious danger, however, must be guarded against. One main function of the Church is to

bear witness to Christ before men by its life. The danger is that men will take the debates in the Assembly as representing the chief concerns of the Church. The proceedings of the Assembly are of practical importance, and, therefore, make good "copy" for newspapers; with nine-tenths of the Church's most important work this is not so. Consequently it is inevitable that those who form their conception of the Church, not from participations in its activities, but from reading in the newspapers such reports as they contain, should acquire a totally false impression of what the life and interests of the Church really are. Faithful pastoral work, even deeply spiritual preaching, supply little "copy." The best sermons are usually dull to read, for their effect depends, not on originality of thought or the turn of phrases, but on the impact of the preacher's personality—which no report of his words can convey. It is inevitable that the representation of the Church in the Press should be misleading, and it is also inevitable that the coming of the Assembly should intensify this evil. It may easily be the duty of the Assembly to spend several days over the financial details of a Clergy Pensions Measure; and it is important for the Church's welfare to secure that they are settled rightly. And it may quite possibly never become the duty of the Assembly to discuss the methods of pastoral visitation or the best ways to evangelise a population that has no hold on spiritual things. Yet the Assembly itself would, of course, unanimously declare that these are infinitely more important subjects than the other. But inasmuch as we are responsible for the witness which we give,

we must do all that is possible to correct the false impression which is so easily created.

If the place of the Assembly in the life of the Church is to be properly estimated, the estimate must be made in reference alike to its direct and to its indirect influence. It must first be considered as a legislative organ. Here it can be claimed without hesitation that, though it has made a few mistakes, it has also learnt by them, and that its legislative output in the short period of its existence is remarkable both in its volume and in its benefit to the Church. When we turn to its indirect influence and consider the establishment of the system of (limited) self-government, of which it is at once the apex and the condition of existence, we may claim with equal confidence that it has already begun to draw together the various schools of thought in the Church under the harmonising influence of a common responsibility, while it has quickened vitality by kindling the hope that if enough people care for a cause they can carry it to achievement.

As a mouthpiece of the Christian conscience the Assembly has not yet become effective. Perhaps the conditions of its election and of its discussion are not, and cannot be, such as to qualify it for this function in any very special degree. But as a means of directing the Christian conscience to matters on which it ought to be, and is not, sensitive, the Assembly has already done much useful work. And its practical achievement in connection with Empire Settlement, through the Council established by it for this purpose, is both a real contribution to a great problem, and an earnest

of what it may do for the Church and Nation in relation to social problems when the arrears of legislation are overtaken, and it has more time to give to such matters. That they are within its purview is made clear by § 14 of the Constitution :

" 14. The functions of the Assembly shall be as follows :—

(1) The Assembly shall be free to discuss any proposal concerning the Church of England and to make provision in respect thereof, and where such provision requires Parliamentary sanction the authority of Parliament shall be sought in such manner as may be prescribed by statute : Provided that any measure touching doctrinal formulæ or the services or ceremonies of the Church of England or the administration of the Sacraments or sacred rites thereof shall be debated and voted upon by each of the three Houses sitting separately, and shall then be either accepted or rejected by the Assembly in the terms in which it is finally proposed by the House of Bishops.

(2) The Assembly or any of the three Houses thereof may debate and formulate its judgment by resolution upon *any matter concerning the Church or otherwise of religious or public interest :* Provided that it does not belong to the functions of the Assembly to issue any statement purporting to define the doctrine of the Church of England on any question of theology, and no such statement shall be issued by the Assembly."

From this it is evident that the Assembly is

much more than a piece of legislative machinery. It must always be remembered that, though its powers in respect of legislation were conferred on it by Parliament—as was necessary, for there is no other source of statutory authority—the Assembly is in no sense whatever the creation of Parliament, and it has powers quite independent of Parliament. Its constitution was drawn up and settled by the Representative Church Council; this was then presented to the Throne by the Convocations; it was referred to in the Enabling Bill, but was not a part of that Act nor contained in a schedule to it. Parliament had no concern with the Constitution at all, except to decide whether or not it would confer upon an Assembly so constituted the powers proposed in that Bill. The Constitution was not in any other sense adopted or approved by Parliament, and was not subject to amendment by Parliament. The Assembly, therefore, has no trace of Erastianism. It would have come into existence, as the successor of the Representative Church Council, whether the Enabling Bill became an Act or not. But, of course, it is true that its importance is largely due to its statutory powers conferred by Parliament, and that it is able to claim and exert a fuller authority in its non-legislative action because it is also capable of acting legislatively. Its statutory powers secure that Churchmen interest themselves in the choice of their representatives and in the action of the Assembly itself, as they would not if it could only utter inoperative opinions; and this by reaction gives weight to its opinions, even when they have no legal force. Thus it is potentially, and will become

increasingly, the focus of the mind and judgment of the Church of England, entitled accordingly to the deference of all Church people, and able to declare what from time to time they learn of the Will of Christ alike for Church and for Nation.

II. THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE CHURCH OVERSEAS

SYNOPSIS

WHATEVER responsibilities attach to the Church of Christ as a whole attach also to the Church of England and therefore to the Church Assembly as its representative body—Our Lord's claim to universal sovereignty over all life and all nations—Our debt to those who first brought Christianity to England—Our special mission to the child races and the older civilisations of the world—The disruptive force of the impact of Western ideas : its challenge to the Christian Church —The English Church missionary since the sixth century— This work delegated since the Reformation to missionary societies—St. Andrewstide and the revival of missionary work —Societies working independently are a source of weakness— The Church Assembly is the only body sufficiently representative to undertake the task of unifying the efforts to supply the needs of the Church overseas—The Missionary Council: the issue of the World Call Reports followed up by Missionary Schools—The value of missionary education—The closer unity between missionary societies—The refusal to regard missionary work as a normal responsibility—Bishops, clergy, and laity should regard the expansion of Christ's Kingdom as the primary work of the Church—Action which the Church Assembly might take to attain that end—The educative value of the Church Assembly funds—The importance of Christian adult education—The individual member of the Church the only source of supply for all ecclesiastical effort—The Church should teach the right principles of giving—Church Assembly must take official cognisance of the needs of the Church overseas—Failure to carry out its Founder's marching orders reacts disastrously on the life of the Church.

II

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE CHURCH OVERSEAS

By the Bishop of St. Albans

HAS the Church Assembly any responsibility for the Church outside the two provinces of Canterbury and York which together comprise the Church of England? If so, what is that responsibility and how should the Assembly seek to fulfil it?

These are the questions with which I have been asked to deal in this chapter. The Church Assembly is actually the only body representative of the whole Church of England, composed as it is of all the diocesan bishops, of those clergy of each diocese who have been elected by their brother clergy to represent them in Convocation, and of lay men and women elected by the lay members of each Diocesan Conference to represent the laity of each diocese. Such a body was brought into being in order that there might be one body of Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the whole Church, which could take counsel together for the furtherance of the work of the Church of England as a whole. It was then known as the Representative Church Council. It was to this body, newly constituted under the name of the National Assembly of the Church of England, that Parliament in 1919 through the Enabling Act entrusted the responsibility of legislating for the Church, by preparing "Measures" to be presented through Parliament to the King for his assent. But it is well to

remember that the Church Assembly, when it was given legislative powers, did not abandon the original purpose of the Representative Church Council (from which it is derived), to further the general work of the Church.

The Church Assembly therefore as the one representative body of the Church of England, must be responsible for what the Church as a whole is responsible. Has, then, the Church of England any responsibility for the Anglican Communion overseas ?

The Church of England claims to be, and is, an integral part of the one Catholic or Universal Church of Christ ; therefore whatever responsibilities attach to the Church of Christ as a whole attach also to the Church of England. Is one of these responsibilities the extension of the faith of Christ throughout the world ? Who can read the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, not to speak of the subsequent history of the Church, without realising that Our Lord claimed universal sovereignty over all life and over all the nations of the world ? Whatever else may be obscure, that is surely as clear as daylight. " Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo ! I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." (St. Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.)

Or again, " Go ye therefore and preach the Gospel to every creature . . . " (St. Mark xvi, 15) ; and once again, when His disciples asked Him—just before His Ascension—whether now He would

not restore the Kingdom to Israel, what was His answer? "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i, 7, 8.)

Could anything be clearer?

"Both in Jerusalem"—amongst your own people, in your own town or parish or home; in all "Judæa"—throughout the countryside, amongst your neighbours in deanery or diocese "in Samaria"—amongst the people with whom so far there has been no social intercourse; "and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The responsibility of passing on the message, like charity, begins at home, but it does not end there.

The great Duke of Wellington was once asked by a young man whether he believed in "Foreign Missions." His reply was characteristic: "Young man, what are your marching orders?"

Read the Acts of the Apostles—the first volume of the history of the Christian Church—and you will see how literally these marching orders were interpreted and carried out by those to whom they were originally given. They did not wait until everyone in Jerusalem or in Judæa or even in Samaria was converted to the Christian faith, but they pushed out towards the uttermost parts of the earth. St. Paul's great ambition to reach Rome was obviously inspired by his belief that if he could once plant the Church there—the centre of the world—Christ's message would spread far

and wide. This it did. Incidentally in due course it reached these shores.

I am writing this within a stone's throw of that glorious Abbey Church dedicated to the memory of the first British Martyr for Christ, St. Alban, a Roman soldier, who died for his faith within the first five years of the fourth century. But since then the Christian religion has become so much part and parcel of the life and history of this country that many are apt to forget that if there had not been Christians who looked upon Our Lord's commission to His Church, to pass on to others His message of life, as an order to be obeyed at all costs, there would never have been a Church of England, and certainly never a Church Assembly ! It is literally true that to those who first brought Christianity to England, and to those who in each successive generation have thought it worth while to keep it alive through their prayers, their personal service and the generosity of their benefactions, we owe all that is most worth having in the history, character, and life of our people. It is to Christian missionaries from overseas that we owe our English homes, our ancient parish churches, and our glorious cathedrals, our schools and universities, our hospitals and homes for the sick, the aged and the poor, our laws and government, indeed, our very existence as one nation under one King. The first united assembly of representatives of the seven kingdoms was a " Church Assembly "— consisting of bishops called together by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury in 673 at Hertford, followed seven years later by a similar Council at Hatfield.

" Freely ye have received, then freely give." If ever these words of Our Lord's applied to any nation they apply to our own : and His command still holds good to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. The Church of England can repudiate this responsibility, but only at the cost of repudiating its Founder, and its debts to the past.

The responsibility for the extension of Christ's Kingdom to the uttermost parts of the earth lies on every part of the Christian Church, but on no part more than on the Church of England. In a very real sense we are, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says of Israel, " a peculiar people." To our nation God has surely entrusted a special mission to the child races of the world, as well as to the older civilisations of India and the Far East. The love of freedom, the spirit of adventure, the power to rule, have driven Englishmen out from the shores of England, north, south, east and west, to the uttermost parts of the earth. Wherever they have gone they have carried with them the ideas, the manners and the customs of the home-land and, to a greater or less degree, their religion. To the native peoples of Africa, India, China and Japan, or of any other part of the world, the Englishman stands not only for Western civilisation but for Christianity. Those who attribute to Christian missionaries the unrest and trouble, for instance, in Africa, India or China, are nearer the truth than they themselves probably realise. But the real and generally the first " Christian missionaries " with whom the child races or the older civilisations of the world have

come in contact have not been people who have gone out as such, but rather traders, administrators, sailors, soldiers, or settlers. It is this impact of Western ideas—indirectly no doubt the result of centuries of Christian teaching—upon Africa and the East that has been and still is a disruptive force.

This fact—which the whole of the history of Christianity during the last nineteen centuries bears out—constitutes a direct challenge to the Christian Church not to rest content with the breaking down of non-Christian customs and civilisations, but in obedience to its Founder's orders to rebuild what has been broken down on a surer and more abiding foundation, by the definite teaching of the Christian religion, through the agencies of Christian missionaries. To no part of the Catholic Church does this challenge come with greater force than to the Church of England—and never probably more so than to-day.

From the sixth century onwards—except for a period of lapse from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century—the English Church has been in greater or less degree a missionary Church, but, since the Reformation this side of its work has been undertaken, not by the Church as a whole acting in its corporate capacity but, by societies of churchpeople established for the purpose. The oldest of these Societies are the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, founded in 1698, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, founded in 1701, and the Church Missionary Society, which came into being ninety-eight years later in 1799.

The first concern, and rightly so, both of the S.P.C.K. and the S.P.G., was the care of our own kith and kin overseas, though from the beginning they recognised the vital importance of bringing the Christian message to the native peoples of the lands in which the English settler or trader was to be found. The last sixty years have seen a great revival of the missionary work of the Church of England, and it is a significant fact that this revival began with the inauguration by the S.P.G. of a Day of Intercession on behalf of foreign missions at St. Andrewstide. This revival has brought into being not only many other missionary societies but has resulted in a large increase of dioceses overseas in all parts of the world, many of which have organised associations of their friends in England to support the work by their prayers and their alms. The result has been a multiplication of societies and associations, all more or less inevitably competing with one another both for the sympathy, interest and prayers of churchpeople, as well as for man-power and material means.

No doubt this activity of competition has had its good results in stirring up more interest among churchpeople in England in overseas work, but its disadvantages are obvious. For when we realise the bigness of the task and the vital necessity of tackling it in a businesslike way, of planning ahead, and of using the available resources to the best advantage, we see that the lack of method, and the absence of a common policy, entailed by a number of societies working independently of one another is a source of weakness and not of strength.

The consequence is that those who are responsible for the missionary work of the Church both at the home-base and overseas are coming more and more to realise the need of some one body—representative of the whole of the Church in England—which will keep in close touch with those responsible for the work overseas, as well as with the various missionary societies and associations at home. Such a body would be able to face the situation as a whole, so that the Church in England could use the resources at its command to the best possible advantage, both in man-power and material means, as well as in the supply of those spiritual reinforcements which come through well-directed, persistent and corporate prayer. This was clearly brought out at a meeting of some 70 overseas and home Bishops held at the invitation of the S.P.G., for two days at the Chichester Retreat House at the end of June, just before the beginning of the Lambeth Conference of 1930, to consider how the Church at home could best meet the pressing needs both in man-power and money of the Church overseas. At this conference Africa, India, China, Japan, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Melanesia and the West Indies were all represented; there were also present representatives of the Headquarters staff of the C.M.S., as well as of the S.P.G. After a long and full discussion of the whole question it was quite clear that in the opinion of the bishops from overseas the Church Assembly was the only body sufficiently representative of the Church at home to undertake (in close co-operation with the various missionary societies and diocesan associations) this task of

unifying and directing to a common and well-planned purpose efforts to supply the needs of the Church overseas. Moreover in their opinion, the Church Assembly was the only body capable of arousing the Church of England to rise to a full sense of its corporate responsibility in this matter.

From the beginning of its existence the Church Assembly has recognised its missionary responsibility by setting up a Missionary Council, and providing funds in its annual budget for maintaining its secretariat. The Missionary Council, which took over the work previously done by the Central Board of Missions, consists both of members of the Church Assembly as well as representatives of the various missionary societies and overseas diocesan associations. It would not be difficult to criticise its work. I have been a member of it since its inception, and in company with all who have been most closely associated with it, I am well aware of its many shortcomings, but that it has not been worth the funds spent upon it I wholly disagree. However, I am convinced that —given time—it can and will render an immensely greater service than heretofore, both to the Church at home and to the Church overseas.

It has already done much to bring home to the Church in England, through the careful compilation and publication of six "World Call" reports, the actual facts of the present situation of the Church overseas, the immense opportunities which are opening out on all hands for a vigorous forward movement in Christian missions, and the present comparative impotence of the Christian Church,

not excluding the Church in England, to take advantage of these opportunities. It followed up this comprehensive statement of facts and needs by inaugurating, in co-operation with the larger missionary societies, a well-thought-out scheme of missionary education, both among the clergy and laity, through "missionary schools" and other methods. This work could, I believe, never have been done if the Church Assembly had not provided the funds necessary for maintaining, in the secretariat of the Missionary Council, something corresponding to the headquarters staff of an army.

In concentrating its attention on the work of education, I am convinced that the Missionary Council did the right thing, for at bottom the real trouble is that the ordinary rank and file of Church people are woefully ignorant about missionary work, and its claim upon everyone who dares to call himself a Christian. Ignorance never produces enthusiasm. It is the fashion in certain quarters to speak of the World Call as a failure. I believe it has been nothing of the kind. Many overseas bishops who have toured England on behalf of their work this year have told me that they have found practically everywhere they have been a keener and more intelligent interest in the cause than they ever found before. My own experience at home during the last ten years certainly bears this out. The work of education is always a slow process; it cannot be otherwise. The one essential thing is to go on and not give it up, and that I trust the Missionary Council will see is done.

Not only has this work of missionary education,

based on the latest and most comprehensive survey of the whole situation, increased the knowledge and therefore the enthusiasm for the cause of the extension of Christ's Kingdom, but again and again it has led on to a further desire on the part of those who have attended a " missionary school " to learn more about the fundamentals of their faith, and, not least, about the science and art of the many-sided enterprise of prayer.

But this is not all that the Missionary Council has already accomplished. It has been the means of drawing together in much closer unity the different missionary societies and associations within the Church, and that greater unity and closer fellowship has been reflected in the relations between the supporters of those societies in the various dioceses and parishes throughout the country.

Those of us who, only a comparatively few years ago, remember the water-tight—indeed the " spirit-tight " !—compartments in which these various societies worked in diocese and parish, can realise what an immense change for the better has come about. Through this closer fellowship the worst features of " party " spirit are gradually disappearing. If space permitted I could say a good deal more of the contribution which the Missionary Council has made to the fuller life of the Church, but I think I have said enough to show that the Church Assembly acted wisely when it set up its Missionary Council.

But if it is to take its full share in representing this side of the Church's work it must do more than merely provide the funds to maintain the work of its Missionary Council. So far it has been appa-

rently content to allow the Missionary Council to go its own way. It has listened at least with politeness and patience to such reports as have been brought before it by the Council, but I can hardly remember a single occasion when it has thought it worth while to discuss any matters raised by those reports. I do not believe that this springs from a lack of interest in the subject, but that it indicates that attitude of mind towards missionary work which is still far too prevalent among churchpeople generally, and is one of the main causes for our comparative failure to back up the work with adequate supplies of man-power, material means and spiritual resources. I mean the refusal to look on missionary work as the essential and normal responsibility of every diocese, parish and professing Christian, and the fallacy of regarding it either as a fad of a few enthusiasts or as merely a " side-show " in comparison with the main work of the Church !

" The preacher this morning is the Bishop of Timbuctoo. The collection will be for Church Expenses " (i.e. paying for the caretaker, light, etc.) " If the collection exceeds the average amount the surplus will be given to the Bishop for his great work in Africa " !

What bishop from overseas has not heard that kind of notice given out by the vicar of a parish when he has been preaching for his work ?

The Church of England will never rise to the full extent of its responsibility for the extension of Christ's Kingdom until that work is looked upon, both by bishops, clergy and laity, as the primary work of the Church.

How can this be brought about, and how can the Church Assembly help in doing so ?

First, the Assembly should find adequate time to consider the question as it affects the whole Church. Though it is true that a little more time is now given to this question than formerly, it is still wholly disproportionate to the time spent on domestic legislation. I am well aware how important the latter is. I am also well aware of how much there was to be done in the way of necessary legislation when the Church Assembly began its work ten years ago. But surely after these ten years we might check the pace somewhat, and give more time for the serious consideration of oversea work. After all, the Church Assembly is there to consider the whole work of the Church and not merely to legislate.

Secondly, the Assembly should consider year by year the whole situation of the Anglican Church overseas, especially in its more distinctive missionary work. It should invite, through its Missionary Council, all those bishops who look to England for any support, either in workers or in funds, to inform the Assembly what their requirements are, not only for the coming year, but as far as they can judge, according to their plans, during, say, the next five years or so.

Thirdly, the Assembly should instruct its Missionary Council to lay before it, after consultation with the missionary societies, a well-considered report on these various requisitions and advise the Assembly accordingly.

Fourthly, the Assembly, after careful consideration, should agree on a budget of man-power and

money for overseas work, and should issue it to the several dioceses as representing the requirements of the Church overseas. This overseas budget should go out with the ordinary budget for our own domestic needs. Each diocese should be told—as it is now for the Church Assembly budget—what proportion of the total sum required each diocese would be expected to produce, and—I should hope—what proportion of workers as well.

If this course were adopted the overseas budget would come to the several dioceses with at least as great authority as our present domestic budget. The Church as a whole would begin to realise that its representative body—the Church Assembly—considered missionary work at least as important as carrying on the work at home. The moral effect of this would, I believe, be of the greatest value. In course of time this action would influence Diocesan Conferences and Diocesan Boards of Finance and they too would begin to budget for overseas work, and later rural deaneries and parishes in the same way, until at last individual churchmen would one day wake up to the idea that to pay for the gas bill was not really the final and supreme purpose of parochial organisation!

During the last ten years, although the Church Assembly has not yet received all that it has asked for the Church Assembly Fund, it has gradually taught dioceses and parishes and individual churchpeople to look upon their contribution for central purposes as a normal part of their ordinary duty. I believe if it issued its overseas budget in the same way, we should gradually see a great change in the attitude of diocese, parish and indi-

vidual churchpeople towards the missionary work of the Church.

Further, the Church Assembly, if it is really going to take this matter seriously, should give more thought and time to the whole question of Christian adult education, especially as it affects the missionary work of the Church and the principles by which churchpeople should regulate their contributions towards the maintenance and extension of the Church.

The only source of supply for this or any other ecclesiastical effort is the individual member of the Church. How many even of the communicants of the Church adopt the method of including in their personal annual or weekly budget a definite proportion of their income for the work of the Church, both in parish, diocese, country and world? Judging from my own experience, I should say that the number who adopt this method is still very small.

It is a question which I know is being seriously considered by the Missionary Council, but I submit it is one which not only affects the overseas work of the Church, but the home work as well, and should be faced by the Church as a whole through the Church Assembly. We have so long been accustomed to be—to all intents and purposes—"ecclesiastical paupers," living on our inherited endowments, that it is still extraordinarily difficult to get Church folk to understand that endowments were never meant to relieve the present generation of their religious obligation to pay according to their means for what they get, and to give that others may get. If the stipend of a

parish priest is in whole or in part already provided through the generosity of past benefactors, all that it should mean to the parishioners is that the money, which they would otherwise have had to pay to provide a parish priest, is set free to be given to those who enjoy no such endowments. Until English churchpeople realise this we shall never be in a position adequately to meet the calls of God, either at home or overseas. To secure this the Church must set itself to teach the right principles of giving.

For my part I believe these principles are clear. First, that all members of the Church should set aside a definite proportion of their income or wages for the work of the Church, at the beginning of each year, and look upon it as "trust money" belonging to God. Secondly, that out of this sum they should pay for what they get, i.e., they should contribute their fair share of the cost of the ministrations of a parish priest, the use of a place of worship, the upkeep of the services, and their share of diocesan and central expenses. Thirdly, that they should give that others may get, and this would include the furtherance of the Church's work, both at home and overseas, as well as such "works of mercy" as Our Lord speaks of in St. Matthew xxv, 31 . . .

In order to help churchpeople to carry out this plan it is essential that the Church should make it clear year by year what the requirements are, both in parish, diocese, country and overseas.

This the Church Assembly can do with far greater authority than any other body, but, I repeat, so long as it practically confines its attention to the

needs of the Church in England, and takes no official cognisance of the needs of the Church overseas, we cannot be surprised if ordinary Church folk imagine that the extension of Christ's Kingdom throughout the world is of minor or no importance.

But no one can read the history of the Church since its beginning without seeing clearly that whenever or wherever it has failed to carry out its Founder's marching orders, this failure has reacted disastrously on its own life and vigour. On the other hand, wherever the Church has concentrated its energies, its prayers, and its sacrifices on seeking loyally to carry out Our Lord's orders to teach all nations, it has resulted in the quickening of its own life, in the increase of its enthusiasm for the cause of Christ, and in the renewed power which comes from faithful dependence upon God in prayer. In the fellowship of a great adventure it has demonstrated to the world the unifying power of the Spirit of Christ. In such loyalty to His commands lies the one solution of all the problems which face the Church of our fathers in this land.

III. THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND OTHER CHURCHES

SYNOPSIS

THE Anglican Communion in relationship with other Churches all over the world—Church Assembly involved in these relationships—At its request representatives were appointed to Conferences on " Life and Work " and " Faith and Order "—Ideal of reunion: unity with variety—Would allow Christian Communions to retain what is distinctive in their worship and service—Church Assembly is helping the Church of England to be more characteristically itself—Movement towards reunion since Edinburgh Conference in 1910—Bishop Brent's plan for World Conference on Faith and Order —" Appeal to All Christian People " in 1920 succeeded by negotiations between Anglican and Free Church leaders—Stockholm Conference, 1926—Lambeth Conference, 1930—Advances made simultaneously in two directions—We stand closer to Eastern Orthodox and Old Catholic Churches on one side and to the non-Episcopal Churches on the other than ever before—Union in South India—Novel feature in the proposed scheme—Its effect on negotiations with Free Churches in England—The positive and negative results of these negotiations in the last six years—Renewal of life in the Church must tarry while ordinary Church members are so indifferent about our divisions.

III

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND OTHER CHURCHES

By the Bishop of Croydon

THE title of this chapter may perhaps raise a question in the reader's mind, "What has the Church Assembly to do with other Churches?" In answer to this question it may be pointed out, in the first place, that no Church liveth unto itself; and, in the providence of God, the Anglican Communion finds itself in relationship with other Churches all the world over. In these relationships the Church Assembly, as an integral part of the Church of England, is closely involved.

For instance, it was at the request of the Church Assembly that the Archbishops appointed the Church of England representatives to the two world-wide Conferences on "Life and Work" at Stockholm in 1926 and "Faith and Order" at Lausanne in 1927. Subsequently, the Committee appointed by the Archbishops to prepare an Anglican answer to the Lausanne questions and suggestions has been officially "recognised" by the Assembly and received an Assembly grant towards its expenses.* The Missionary Council, one of the Assembly's permanent Committees, is,

* The Report of this Committee has recently been published, entitled "Report of the Committee appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to consider the Findings of the Lausanne Conference." Price 3s.

naturally, in frequent contact with the missionary organisations of other Churches.

The truth is that what the Church of England is and does in these days finds a fairly full and faithful reflection in the Church Assembly, and any book which sets forth the work of the Assembly must needs take into account not only the Church's internal organisation but also its external relationships.

But there is yet a further reason for the Church Assembly being concerned in this matter—a reason which is closely connected with the kind of unity and reunion which throughout the Church is generally felt to be desirable. What is the ideal of reunion which holds the field to-day? I should describe that ideal by using the phrase "Unity with Variety." It cannot be said too often or too emphatically that reunion does not mean a flat and dreary uniformity. Church people who have misgivings about reunion often talk as if it must involve a flattening out, as by some ecclesiastical steam roller, of all the distinctive features of the different Churches; as if in order to achieve unity each Church would give up that which it holds most dear. Nothing, surely, can be farther from the true ideal, the ideal which has its source in the mind of our Divine Master. The aim which is inspiring every worthy effort towards unity was enunciated in unforgettable language in the famous "Appeal to all Christian People" issued by the Lambeth Conference of 1920, where it was written, "The vision which rises before us is that of a Church, genuinely Catholic, loyal to all Truth, and gathering into its fellowship all 'who profess and call them-

selves Christians,' within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole body of Christ. Within this unity Christian Communions now separated from one another would retain much that has long been distinctive in their methods of worship and service. It is through a rich diversity of life and devotion that the unity of the whole fellowship will be fulfilled."

If such is the true aim of reunion, then it is for each Church as a part of its preparation for that great objective to do all in its power to develop its own life in order to be in a position to make its own special contribution. As it draws nearer to other Churches it is for each Communion to be not less but more itself. Now this is the point where the Church Assembly, as it seems to me, is most of all concerned. The Church Assembly is beyond all question helping the Church of England to be more characteristically itself. It has already done much, and will do even more, in removing all that clogs and hinders the Church's development of its own characteristic life. I believe it is true to say that all that the Assembly has done in such exceedingly practical matters as finance and pensions and patronage has meant a strengthening of the life of the great Church that is to be, and the new inner unity in the Church of to-day, the new loyalty to the Church of England as such, has been immensely strengthened and fostered by the work and the spirit of the Assembly. In the Church Assembly, with its powers of fusing into a larger whole the lesser loyalties, the sectional desires, the very real

differences, one can see reflected that which makes the Anglican Communion with all its comprehensiveness able to stretch out hands to other Churches in quite opposite directions.

It is sometimes complained, perhaps not without justice, that the cause of reunion suffers from the apathy and ignorance of those who may be called the rank and file of the various Churches. How far this is true of the Church of England as a whole it is impossible to judge. No doubt there are some individuals and some congregations who are well informed on those matters, just as there are others whose lack of zeal as well as of knowledge are calculated to bring despair to those who ardently desire faster progress in these matters. This book which, I understand, purports to be written for Church members who are interested or at least ready to be interested, and are willing to learn more than they know already about the Church's affairs, ought clearly to contain somewhere between its covers some intelligible account of the present position as between the Anglican Communion and other Christian Churches. The rest of this chapter, therefore, may well be devoted to some account of what has been going on in these matters of recent years, and of the immediate prospects in consequence of the decisions taken at the great Lambeth Conference which has just come to an end.

Twenty years ago there gathered at Edinburgh representatives from many nations and many different Christian Churches to confer together about the Church's great task of extending the frontiers of Christ's Kingdom, and to plan and work for a much closer degree of unity and co-

operation in discharging that task. Some of those present thought to themselves, "Must not the Churches one day come together, not merely to discuss co-operative work, but to get right down to the fundamental questions of Faith and Order which at present divide?"

One man in particular—Bishop Brent of the United States—saw great visions, and started then and there to plan for a great world Conference on questions of Faith and Order. In God's providence he lived actually to preside over such a Conference, which took place seventeen years later at Lausanne; though since then he has joined the greater company where unity is not partial but perfect, and he has handed on the earthly part to others. "Lausanne" turned out to be a far greater achievement than anybody had dared to hope. There was no burking of disagreements, which were brought out and examined in the full light of day, and there was discovered a wonderful measure of agreement between the one hundred and eight Churches who took part in the Conference. The result of Lausanne has been to compel, with irresistible moral suasion, many Churches to consider where they stand in their relationship to other Churches, and to encourage in some parts of the world consideration of actual practical schemes for reunion.

Two other avenues have been converging on the present position as represented in the Lambeth Conference just terminated. One of these was the Lambeth Conference of 1920, with its memorable "Appeal to Christian people," and the practical proposals for negotiations to follow. That appeal

to Christian people was a magnificent Christian gesture. For the Anglican Communion, through its accredited leaders and spokesmen, to say what was said in the appeal and in the resolutions, and to say it in such a way, was a new thing and a great thing in the history of the Church, and has exercised a far-reaching influence during the years that have elapsed since. That Conference was succeeded by prolonged and careful negotiations between Anglican and Free Church leaders in this country, negotiations which did much to clear the ground and to indicate what might and what might not be hopeful lines to pursue in any future discussions of actual reunion schemes.

The other main line of approach to the position in which we find ourselves to-day was that pursued at " Stockholm " in 1926. This great Conference on " Life and Work " initiated a new era of understanding and sympathetic co-operation between the Church of England and the Churches on the continent in the region of what might be called "Applied Christianity "—the working out of Christian ethics in the spheres of industry, commerce, problems of race and of government, of peace and of war.

And so we come by these various roads to the position to-day. The Lambeth Conference of 1930 has come to an end just 24 hours before these words are penned, and before this book is published the recommendations and resolutions of that Conference will be in the hands of the Church. All discussions of unity and reunion will, now and for a long time to come, perforce be carried on in the light of what has happened at Lambeth ; and, in the same way, the relation of the Church of

England to other Churches has been clarified afresh and in such a fashion, so many will feel, as to prepare the way for fruitful action.

First of all it may not be amiss for one who was present at the Conference to bear testimony to the wonderful spirit which pervaded that gathering of 308 bishops from beginning to end of those five weeks together. The prayers of the Church had been asked for, and in abundant measure those prayers were answered. When at times of strain and tension, and even of crisis, we found not only that our fellowship was unbroken, but that we could win through to something like a really common mind, we all were conscious that the ultimate influence controlling and guiding our gathering was nothing less than the Spirit of God Himself.

Writing so close to the Conference and after the strain of the five weeks' labours it is naturally difficult to view the work of the Conference in due proportion and perspective, and more difficult still to forecast what the ultimate results will be. But whatever use may be made of the recommendations given, whatever response may be given to the suggestions which have been proffered, it will be perfectly evident that through these deliberations of its bishops the Anglican Communion has stretched out a friendly hand of fellowship towards other Churches in two directions. To be able to make advances simultaneously in two very different directions is entirely characteristic of the unique position which the Anglican Communion occupies in Christendom. In the phrase invented at "Lausanne," and worn rather smooth since

with constant use, the Anglican Communion by its very history and nature is calculated to be a " Bridge-Church." Never has this providential characteristic of our Church been so obvious and so useful as it has been during this Lambeth Conference. We stand now much closer on the one side to the Eastern Orthodox and Old Catholic Churches, and, on the other side, to the non-episcopal Churches, than we have ever stood before in our long history.

With regard to both these groups, interesting and important decisions have been arrived at. The Conference received a large and imposing delegation from the Orthodox Church of the East arranged by the œcumenical Patriarch and headed by the Patriarch of Alexandria. The delegation was present at the services at Canterbury and St. Paul's Cathedral, and was received at a full session of the Conference, and subsequently at full and lengthy consultations with the sub-committee appointed by the Conference to consult with them. The Conference also received a deputation from the Old Catholic Churches, which, too, had detailed discussion with the same sub-committee. The result has been a very marked advance in understanding, and even in more than understanding, as between the Anglican Communion and these Churches. In 1922 the validity of Anglican ordination had been recognised by the Patriarchal and Holy Synod of Constantinople. This declaration paved the way for the further progress now made. Both the delegations intimated that they desired definite and practical steps to be taken for the restoration of communion

between their Churches and ours. The Archbishop of Canterbury has been asked by the Conference to appoint a commission of theologians who would confer with similar theologians, to be appointed (if all goes well) by the authorities of the Orthodox Church and by the Old Catholics. It is hoped that these commissions, when they get to work, may find that there does in fact exist such substantial unity in faith and practice between the Churches as to justify in the not distant future the restoration of communion between them.

This real advance on the one side has at the same time been balanced by an equally interesting and important movement on the other side towards the non-episcopal Churches. Here, of course, the test question was the proposed scheme of union in South India, as to which the Lambeth Conference was asked for its guidance by the members of our Church in South India. For readers of this chapter who may be unfamiliar with the details of the South India scheme it may be explained that the proposed scheme, which has been evolved through ten years of patient thought and prayer and effort, and which has now reached its penultimate stage, is for a union in South India between the members of our Church and the Wesleyan Methodists and what is known as the South India United Church—so called because it unites the converts of the Presbyterian and the Congregational Missions. " The general conception of the scheme "—I quote here from the description given in the Lambeth encyclical—" is that these different elements will come to-

gether in one body, possessing the traditional framework of faith and order which characterised the whole Church for so many centuries. Within this one body the constant intercourse of the different members will gradually bring about a unity in which all those things that are of God in their several traditions will be not only preserved, but enriched by happy combination. This process cannot be initiated without sacrifices, and must, in its early stages, involve anomalies and irregularities which have given rise to serious misgivings in many minds. But these misgivings are outweighed by hope and by our trust in God's will to perfect His work of reconciliation."

Such a scheme really means a great corporate Christian adventure. Our brothers in India are pioneers in a worthy cause, and it is for us in the homeland and throughout the whole Anglican Communion to stand by them at this time with our sympathy, and prayers and generous loyalty. An interesting and novel feature of the scheme is that the new United Church, while not giving up the use of the Prayer Book or discarding any of the doctrines of the Anglican Communion, will not itself be an Anglican Church within what is called the Anglican Communion. It will be a distinct province of the Universal Church and in intercommunion with the Churches of the Anglican Communion. Anyone with any vision and with a real belief in the power of God's Spirit to guide the Church in new ways as the centuries pass will see how great and significant this adventure is, and will pray that it may prove to be a big step towards the coming into being of a

Church that is " catholic " in the true sense of that word.

The cordial approval accorded to the South India scheme by the Lambeth Conference does unquestionably open up a fresh vista of possibilities in the direction of the Free Churches in England. The six years of negotiations between the Anglican Bishops and Free Church leaders following upon Lambeth, 1920, established at least two significant results—one positive and one negative.

On the positive side the following statement about the Free Church ministries was agreed to by the Anglican bishops who represented the Church of England in these conferences : " Ministries which imply a sincere intention to preach Christ's Word and administer the Sacraments as Christ has ordained, and to which authority so to do has been solemnly given by the Church concerned, are real ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church."

This declaration on the Anglican side has quite naturally given a more hopeful aspect to any discussions about those thorny questions of Order (as distinct from questions of Faith) of which any reunion negotiations must take account. On the other hand, those post-Lambeth-1920 discussions, already referred to, showed quite clearly that no form of recommissioning which involved reordination would be acceptable to the majority of the Free Churches. The Free Churches, so it seems, might possibly be willing to accept episcopacy (of the constitutional kind) as a condition of reunion, but not episcopacy with reordination.

So it is with renewed hope of progress that the Conference has invited the non-episcopal churches to enter once again into conferences with the Anglican Communion. What kind of response will be made to this invitation, and what results might follow from such renewed " conversations," it is impossible to forecast. What can be said, with certainty, is that there is to-day, all the world over, a great tide flowing in the direction of Christian unity. There are signs, on every side, that the ancient acquiescence in Christian divisions as something inevitable, something belonging to the natural order of things, is breaking up, and there is gradually taking its place a conception of a Christian body, with considerable local and national variations, but nevertheless essentially one. But it must be added that this vision, with the desire for reunion, is at present far stronger among the leaders of the Churches than among the rank and file. There are too many ordinary Church members, Anglican and Nonconformist, upon whose spiritual horizon the idea of reunion, as a vital thing in corporate and personal Christian life, has hardly emerged ; they are neither troubled in conscience about our divisions nor filled with any deep desire that those divisions should be healed. That " renewal of life " in the Church, so greatly desired, so often spoken of, so earnestly prayed for, is bound to tarry until there can be in all our Church circles, central, local and personal, a more deliberate making room to receive it : an enlargement of outlook, a lifting up of the spirit, a drawing together in closer fellowship of *all*, of whatsoever Church or group, who are " looking

for the redemption of Israel." In this great spiritual movement unity is a vital factor, and corporate reunion will come as its fruit. For that "Day of the Lord" it is for each part of Christ's Catholic Church to get ready, with loins girded and lights burning.

IV. THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE CLERGY

SYNOPSIS

THE parochial clergy the entire framework of the Church—In the parish the parson matters more than the Bishop or the squire—Criticism of the clergy does not emanate from the instructed laity—The changed position of the clergy to-day—The ground lost by the Church in the last fifty years—Misconceptions which have injured the influence of the Church: the impression that the Church is part of the machinery of Government—The conception underlying the Enabling Act: The Church is a "Voluntary" Society, open to all yet involving rules and obligations of membership—Sole justification of democracy is education not efficiency—Spiritually the Church can never be a democracy—In the parishes the hierarchy now have to work through democratic channels with the laity in non-spiritual matters—The Church Assembly has attempted to deal with this problem in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure—The responsibility of the incumbent towards the Church Council—The need of the laity for education in almsgiving—Efforts of the Assembly to call the laity to a proper sense of their financial obligations—Noteworthy results of ten years' work—Financial reforms in relation to the Diocesan Quotas—The parochial quota dependent on the active endeavours of the clergy—Exceptional difficulties under which the Assembly has been working—Need for patience, courage and faith—The Enabling Act has enabled the Church to shape its own reforms—We have got to make our organisation efficient so that the Church may lead the Nation to the throne of God.

IV

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE CLERGY

By Viscount Wolmer, M.P.

THERE is no body of men for whom I have so much respect as I have for the parochial clergy of the Church of England. They are more than the backbone of the Church, they are its entire framework. Usually it matters little to the religious life of the parish who the bishop is, who the squire is, or what sort of folk the other laity are. What does matter is who is the parson, and, generally speaking, the parson does his work a great deal better than any of the other categories mentioned could do it for him. What work it is! To succeed completely a parish priest must be saintly, human, tactful, energetic, sympathetic, cheerful, genial, firm, brave, well read, and wise! One is reminded of Gilbert's description of the Heavy Dragoon. It is indeed a high standard to apply to a body of 17,000 men—all, as has been observed, recruited from the laity.

And when the day's task has been done how little thanks he gets for it! The English must have something to criticise. When they are tired of commenting on the weather they usually turn their attentions to the clergy. Most frequently they criticise their parson's sermons. Now, I am a professional speaker myself, and when some brother M.P. criticises the oratory of the clergy I often ask him how he would like to address the

same village twice every Sunday for fifty Sundays in the year for twenty years. The thought makes him reel—and so it does me.

I have written this not only because it is what I feel myself, but because it is what I believe the instructed laity of the Church also feel. The constant trickle of carping criticism must often be very discouraging and exasperating to incumbents, but ninety per cent. of it comes from individuals who themselves do not lift a little finger to help forward the work of the Church, and who are quite unaware of the difficulties that confront the clergy and the splendid work they are accomplishing. The instructed laity immensely respect and value their parsons, and their principal concern is to facilitate the work of the clergy, as they know that in so doing they are promoting the work of the Church.

As the problems of the Church change so do the problems of the clergy change. The position of the clergy, especially in the country, is to-day very different from what it was in the seventeenth, eighteenth, or even in the nineteenth century. The parson of to-day has to deal with an educated or semi-educated democracy, fresh to political power, fresh to comparative wealth and luxury, apt to be contemptuous of the canons of the past, and suspicious of coercion in any form. At the same time he is oppressed by grave financial difficulties, caused by the depreciated purchasing power of money, which confront him, not only in regard to parochial administration, but also, and still more, in respect of his domestic affairs. How are the clergy to deal with this

situation and how is the Church to assist them in so doing ?

In some directions it is perhaps true that the Church is in a stronger position than formerly, but it is certainly also true that in others it has lost much ground during the last fifty years. The continued existence of Nonconformist chapels in nearly every village bears witness to the fact that the Church fails to satisfy the religious needs of a large section of the population, still more the general decline in Church-going shows that the Gospel is not reaching the greater proportion of the nation.

The popular impression that the clergy are State-paid, that bishops are appointed like ambassadors, and that the Established Church is as much part of the machinery of government and the preserve of the upper classes as is the bench of magistrates, has probably done more to injure the influence of the Church in this age than most other factors. One of the principal conceptions underlying the Enabling Act, the Church Assembly and all its subordinate machinery was to make the people realise that the Church is a " voluntary " society, open to all, yet involving rules and obligations of membership—a body demanding voluntary service from its members and in a position to decide for itself all questions within its sphere. That conception I believe to be fundamentally right. There is little chance of our modern self-reliant democracy caring for the Church unless they feel both that it is a society independent of the secular arm, and that they can render recognised service in its administration. No doubt this conception has

many disadvantages and difficulties. Every age brings its own problems. The Parochial Church Council will not light and heat the church any more efficiently after many hours' debate than the squire and the parson settling the details together in five minutes. But anyone who has had any experience of the working of a democratic organisation knows that it can never be so efficient as a good autocracy. Democracy does not mean efficiency, it means education. Once people arrive at a certain stage of development, they are not content to have things done for them. They want to have a finger in the pie. If they burn their fingers and spoil the pie they are less inclined to criticise the chef next time. That is the sole justification for democracy.

We live in a democratic age, and if the Church is to get the best out of people it must work down the grain of democracy and not against it. Spiritually the Church is not, and never can be, a democracy. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" is the governing principle of its organisation. But that is not to say that, in all the points where the hierarchy come into contact with the laity in non-spiritual matters, they should not work through democratic channels in the present age, just as they worked through monarchic or oligarchic channels in past ages. They must use the instrument most suited to their time.

We see the whole problem in our parishes—the fighting line of the Church. A Parochial Church Council was not intended to supplant the parson, but the squire. It is the representative of the laity, but it possesses no duties that are not proper to the laity. In urban parishes where no

squire had ever existed the necessity of a Parochial Church Council was more apparent than in rural parishes, but in the country the squire is a dying institution and something had to take his place.

The Church Assembly has attempted to deal with this problem in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure of 1921, and in succeeding Measures which have given further powers to Parochial Church Councils. It has gone on the principle of giving as much as possible to the councils of powers which have always resided in the laity, whether they be sidesmen or churchwardens or patrons, and to maintain unimpaired the spiritual prerogatives of the priesthood. The problem has, of course, to be worked out by the incumbent in the parish. There may often be a tendency that, when the Parochial Church Council has got together, the local busybody will stray beyond the proper sphere of the laity and try to lead others after him. The wise parson will endeavour to educate his Parochial Church Council and the church electors in the elementary principles of ecclesiastical government—not by the assertion of his rights when some point in dispute arises (that is the worst possible moment to do it), but on other occasions, and systematically, right from the doctrine of apostolic succession. In everything that does not touch the spiritual prerogatives of the clergy the incumbent will be well advised to let his council have their own way, even if he knows that they are making a mistake. It will often be tactful if he even withdraws half-way through the proceedings with the remark that the other matters on the agenda he would prefer the Council

to settle as they think best, having every confidence in their judgment. In some parishes such an action might be mistaken for laziness and then the wise parson will not take it, but in many cases he will get the best work out of his people by casting as much responsibility as possible upon them and leaving them to profit by experience.

It cannot be expected that this process of education will have been achieved in a decade. Too long the laity have had their work done for them and have been ignorant of their primary duties. In no sphere has this had more deplorable results than in almsgiving. What our laity give is generally a pittance compared with the generosity of Nonconformists and Roman Catholics, and of Anglicans overseas. The principal cause of this is not stinginess but ignorance. It has been one of the chief aims of the Church Assembly to call the laity to a proper sense of their financial obligations through the machinery of the Central and Diocesan Boards of Finance. What has been accomplished in this direction in ten years is certainly very noteworthy. Hundreds of thousands of pounds that had never been raised before have been collected for the needs of the Church, of which the principal is the better payment and training of the clergy. But it is a mere fraction of what could be accomplished with a laity properly instructed as to their financial obligations and loyalty to the Assembly.

Take the Dilapidations Measure of 1923 and the Clergy Pensions Measure of 1926. Dilapidations and pensions were very long overdue reforms. The position in which the clergy had been placed was both a scandal and a weakness to the Church. But

the Assembly had to cut its coat according to its cloth. In putting dilapidations and pensions on a proper system it was not able to give the clergy as much financial assistance as they required, simply because the money had not been collected. As a result both these reforms have in certain respects pressed with undue severity on the slender finances of some of the clergy. Under the Pensions Measure the Central Board of Finance makes a grant of £50,000 per annum towards the pensions of the clergy. But if higher diocesan quotas could be collected that sum could easily be quadrupled. The Central Board of Finance can apportion diocesan quotas, but the money has to be collected in the parishes. I am certain that there is no service the clergy can render of more assistance to their own financial difficulties, or of greater benefit to the general well-being of the Church, than by inculcating among the laity a sense of loyalty to the financial calls and decisions of the Church Assembly and the Diocesan Conference. If every diocese and every parish would pay its quota in full, and punctually, the great bulk of the financial difficulties of the Church and the clergy would disappear. In the majority of cases the money is not collected simply and solely because the laity do not recognise their financial obligations, and have not a proper sense of loyalty to the Assembly itself.

Do not these simple facts give us food for thought? Let every Diocesan Board of Finance tackle separately those parishes which are not sending up their quota in full. Put the facts before them. They are not less generous than their neighbours who are doing their share. They merely do not

realise their duties. It is this realisation that is required, but it cannot be accomplished without the active endeavours of the parochial clergy themselves, who, as I have already remarked, are the vital factor in every parish.

It is true that sometimes the clergy are inclined to criticise the work of the Assembly. Why shouldn't they ? Criticism is every Englishman's prerogative, and the clergy have been so much criticised themselves that surely they have a right to take part in the game now. But there is criticism and criticism, as they themselves have every reason to know ; and after he has had his grouse the sensible man gets on with the job. No one pretends that the Assembly has not made mistakes—it is exclusively composed of bishops, clergy and laity—all human and fallible. We are all partly responsible, the parochial clergy among others, as they elect a majority of the House of Clergy in the Assembly, and nothing can pass the Assembly without the consent of all three Houses. Apprehension that a mistake has been made is good ground for endeavouring to get that mistake remedied ; it is not a reason for refusing to collaborate. Therefore, even if we think that the Assembly has not been right in all its decisions (and who does not ?) that is no reason for belittling the importance of its work, or for denying the loyalty that all churchpeople owe to its calls. Furthermore, we must always bear in mind the exceptional difficulties under which the Assembly has been working. Generations of arrears in Church reform created a series of vicious circles that formed a veritable entanglement. Take finance again. Until the finances of the Church had been put on a proper

basis the laity could not be expected to give their money with liberality. But until the laity give with liberality the finances of the Church cannot be put upon a proper basis. Similarly in regard to other reforms. The abuse of the sale of livings had to be terminated with equity to all parties, the machinations of the Party Trusts had to be frustrated, the rare scandal of the incompetent or negligent incumbent who was immovable had to be abolished. All these reforms have meant placing larger powers in the hands of the bishops, and some people feel that as long as bishops are appointed as at present they ought not to be endowed with greater powers. But there is no chance of the Church gaining the right to the free choice of its own bishops until it has shown itself capable of remedying the glaring abuses that called the Church Assembly into being. We are gradually evolving order out of chaos, and for this patience, courage and faith are required.

The important thing to remember about the Enabling Act is that it is enabling. It has given the Church a chance, without destroying the Establishment or repudiating the national recognition of religion, to shape its own reforms, financial and administrative. That chance has been taken, but the work has only just commenced. We have got to try to hand over to those who come after us a Church which is properly equipped administratively and financially in all details for its gigantic task. We have got to make our organisation efficient. Our bishops must be fathers in God over dioceses of manageable size, so that they can know their clergy and people and their clergy and people

know them. Our clergy must be well trained, well paid, and not overworked. Our laity must be welded into a corporate loyalty capable of giving zealous service to the Church.

By so doing surely we shall be advancing the Kingdom of Heaven. We shall be meeting new difficulties with modern weapons. We shall be solving the problems of our age as our fathers solved the problems of theirs. We shall be helping the Church to fulfil its task efficiently. That task is the greatest of all tasks—to lead the Nation to the Throne of God.

V. THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND CONVOCATION

SYNOPSIS

COMPARISON between the Assembly and Convocation—Though legislative activity of Convocation has not been wholly suspended since 1852 the legislative power of the Church until the Assembly Act was passed was almost entirely ineffective—Question as to what power of legislation might be expected to belong to a Church—No final rules of Church order laid down by Our Lord nor discussed in the Acts or Epistles—The early Church considered new problems as a community and determined them in the light of its permanent message—These facts underlie the whole history of synods and councils—The growth of the Church has had profound effects upon its external activities—Regulations and principles in existence at various times depend upon the work to be done—The validity of the Church's judgments is secured by deliberation and interchange of views followed by decision—The importance of the Convocations estimated by the extent to which they have preserved the power of the Church to express its mind—Co-operation between Church and State in early days of English Church—Separation of jurisdictions of Church and State under William the Conqueror—The Church avoided the inclusion of Convocation in Parliament—No sharp distinction between the concerns of the Church and the State—Prerogatives formerly claimed by the Pope assumed by the Crown—Same difficulty to-day as in the Middle Ages in making a distinction between the province of the Church and of the Crown—Questions upon which the Church has expressed a decided vote—The supremacy of the King illustrated by the appeal of the "Wee Free" Church in Scotland—Tendency throughout the English Church to associate a House of Laymen with the Clerical Houses—The English Church should preserve its peculiar characteristics and also maintain its position as a living body with a loyalty to Christian people throughout the world.

V

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND CONVOCATION

By the Bishop of Oxford

IT may be well to begin the consideration of this subject by noting some of the characteristics of Convocation and the Church Assembly as they exist at the present day. Convocation has a long and varied history ; the Church Assembly came into existence in 1919. Convocation consists of two Houses : the House of Bishops, which contains all the bishops with jurisdiction in the two provinces of Canterbury and York ; the House of Clergy, which consists of a body of elected representatives of the clergy of the two provinces. The Church Assembly consists of three Houses : the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy, and the House of Laity. The two clerical Houses in the Church Assembly consist of precisely the same individuals as the two Houses of Convocation. The House of Laity consists of a body of laymen elected to represent the dioceses of the Church. It is not necessary at this point to consider the method of election in detail. Convocation is summoned by the Crown in connection with a General Election, and is dissolved by the Crown when Parliament is dissolved. Thus the personnel of two of the Houses of the Church Assembly depends upon the Crown. When properly constituted Convocation, under strict limitations of Crown control, can pass canons, but it cannot as such initiate legislation in Parliament. On the

other hand the Church Assembly can present a Measure approved by it to Parliament and ask that it may be sent forward to receive the Royal Assent. Parliament can refuse its assent, but it cannot amend the Measure.

The bare statement of these facts is sufficient to show that legislation by the Church has been a matter of great difficulty. But it would not be true to imagine that the legislative activity of Convocation has been wholly suspended, since the Convocations were permitted to meet for business in 1852. The canons dealing with the subscription of the clergy to the Articles and the Book of Common Prayer have been amended ; the canons regulating the hours within which marriages may be celebrated have been changed ; a canon has been passed dealing with beneficed priests who have been convicted of crime or immorality, and the method of electing members of the Lower House of Convocation has been altered. All these alterations of canons, except the last, were passed in order to bring the canons of the Church into line with Acts of Parliament passed independently of the Church, by Convocation ; the change in the method of electing proctors was attained under the Church Assembly Act. When we add to this that Convocation was not permitted to deal with any business between the years 1717 and 1852, it will be seen that the legislative power of the Church, until the Church Assembly Act was passed, was almost entirely ineffective.

It will be seen also that the whole question of ecclesiastical legislation is extremely complicated. This is due in part to the nature of the subject

itself—questions must inevitably be raised as to what power of legislation might be expected to belong to a Church—and in part to the perplexed history of the Church of England. We must consider the first of these points briefly by way of preface.

It is sometimes stated that Jesus Christ founded no Church. This seems to be an unjustifiably sweeping statement, but it has this degree of truth in it—there is no evidence that our Lord formulated a definite detailed creed, or laid down complete and final rules of Church order. It used to be said that all this took place during the period between the Resurrection and the Ascension. But there is no tangible evidence for such a belief, and the Apostles, when the day of Pentecost came, do not show any sign of acting under fixed and definite rules, either of doctrine or practice. They describe themselves as being witnesses to certain events which involve certain spiritual and intellectual consequences, they practise baptism as a method of admitting people to their fraternity, and they share a common meal. They do not, at first, show any sense of a world-wide mission; their work starts in Jerusalem. They do not travel far from the language of the Old Testament, and they appeal to it as an authority for their new message. They are prepared to take action, when circumstances require it, as in the appointment of the seven deacons and the evangelisation of Samaria. They do not justify their actions by appeal to any instructions of our Lord's; they assume that the gift of the Holy Spirit is sufficient.

The Book of the Acts provides us with an account

of events and not a discussion of principles. From the record we learn how the Christian body came to consciousness of itself and learned the way of corporate action. The two cases of definite action to which we have just referred were connected with changes in the community itself. The numbers had increased and measures had to be taken for division of labour ; converts began to come from outside the Jewish circle and it became necessary to decide how to deal with them. The Apostles seem to have dealt with these problems on their own authority (Acts vi, 2 ; viii, 14) though they entrust the selection of the seven to the " multitude of the disciples." The question of the admission of the Gentiles involved differences of opinion within the Church, and for the settlement of these a formal meeting or council was held. The decision to send the letter to Antioch was made by " the apostles and the elders with the whole of the Church " (Acts xv, 22), but the letter runs in the name of the Apostles and elder brethren (Acts xv, 23) and assumes the possession of some definitely authoritative character (Acts xv, 28, 29). Neither in the Acts nor in the Epistles is there any formal discussion of the principles of Church order. What we do find is that the Church, partly through natural development within, and partly by reason of persecution from without, becomes definitely conscious of itself as a unity. Different persons had different gifts and functions, but the community is one thing existing to bear witness to the life and history, especially the resurrection of the Lord.

It is, of course, natural, considering the problem before it, that the society should have followed this

procedure ; it did, in fact, what any society must do in similar circumstances ; and the peculiarity of it consisted not in the method selected but in the presence of the Holy Spirit, guiding and informing the procedure. As it had to deliver its message in different atmospheres of thought and religion, it considered its new problems as a community, and determined them in the light of its permanent message. It is this process that we find in operation in the discussions with the Gnostics, as Irenaeus describes them, and it is in this way that the New Testament was gathered together and ranged on an even higher level than the books which the Church inherited from Judaism. There have been many disputes, ending sometimes in schisms, as to the way in which this principle should be expressed in action, but the fundamental idea running through the whole history is that the Church has a message for the world, and that it is the Church alone which can determine the particular teaching and practice through which the message may be most fitly interpreted to successive ages. Dissension impairs the force of the delivery of the message, and puts unnecessary difficulties in the work of witness, but these impediments do not affect the fundamental character of the work of the Church in the world.

It has been necessary to call attention to these familiar facts, because they underlie the whole history of synods and councils and the various deliberative assemblies which have come into being at various times in the history of the Church. The growth of the Church in extent, and its relation to various peoples and languages have had profound effects upon its external activities, but in surveying their

history and estimating its significance it is necessary always to keep in view the fundamental task laid upon the Church. It is perhaps not too much to say that the regulations and principles which are found in existence at various times, have, ultimately, a practical value—they depend upon the work that has got to be done. There are certain points which affect mainly a single diocese; these will be discussed and determined by the bishop with his clergy (*cf.* S. Ign. *Magn.* 7). There will be questions which affect a number of contiguous dioceses; these will be dealt with by the bishops of the district, whether or no they are formally grouped together as a province. There will be great questions of doctrine such as that raised by the Arian heresy, and it may seem desirable to hold a council of bishops from all parts of the Christian world. It is not meant, when this is said, that doctrinal issues could not be dealt with in the days before 325, when the Council of Nicea was called together. The Church managed without an œcumenical council to determine its position as against Gnostic innovations, and it was the acceptance by the Church at large of the determinations at Nicea which gave its œcumenicity to the Council. It would not be true to say that, on the day of the publication of the Nicene results, everyone would immediately know "what the teaching of the Church is" or "what the Church stands for." It is by slow degrees and the gradual permeation of ideas that the Church in the past has declared its mind.

One reason why this should be we have already found in the extension of area covered by the

growing Church ; different types of meeting and discussion would be found appropriate for different sections of the Church. There is another reason to be found in the subject-matter of the Church's teaching. This, as has already been said, was primarily historical in character ; converts were not asked to accept a series of philosophical or theological formulæ. They expressed their belief in a series of historical events. Certain things had happened and the apostles and their successors were witnesses to these. But an historical event may involve considerations which belong to philosophy or theology in the scientific sense. If it is asserted that the Son of God became incarnate at a certain time and place, lived a human life, died upon the Cross and was raised from the dead a number of questions inevitably arise. A man who is challenged by this teaching may find that he has to recast all his previous ideas as to the nature of God and man and the course of the world. Or, on the other hand, a man who holds these historical assertions as true may find that some members of the Church are persuaded of the truth of a theology which destroys his historical convictions. Such clashes of ideas are inevitable, and it takes time to lay them to rest. Both parties may be sincere, and appeal to plausible arguments, and it will take a long time to sort out the true elements from the false and to reach a form which really expresses for the whole Church the decided opinion of the whole body. The question raised by Arius was not settled till Chalcedon ; the books written and the councils held were stages in the process of final determination.

If we have been right, so far, in our outline of the deliberate activities of the Church, it will be clear that, as a body, it has the right and power to determine such questions as may arise in the course of experience, and that the validity of its judgments as an expression of the opinion of the society is secured by deliberation and interchange of views followed by decision. It would be inevitable that different matters would require different treatment, and that various general principles would be gradually defined by which procedure would come to be regulated. It is obviously impossible in a short paper, such as the present, to discuss at length the whole history of the deliberative bodies which have functioned at various times. The appeal to the Holy Scripture will have taken on a particular form, after the canon was closed. Discussions as to the precedence of various sees, especially that of Rome, will have affected the question ; different ideas as to the relation of the State to the Church will have introduced complications. The decline and fall of the Roman empire produced different results in the East and the West. Our own peculiar history in England, to which we must now turn, has given a special character to the Convocations of the Church of England, and raises questions of considerable difficulty. In estimating the importance of the various forms in which different Churches have developed this part of their work, the main question is how far they have preserved the power of the Church to express its mind in doctrine and practice. A system which fails in this respect is a real departure from the proper order of Church life.

In the early days of the English Church there seems to have been an unusual degree of co-operation between the State and the Church. It was founded in a part of England which had no strong tradition in regard to Christianity; the Celtic Church stood aloof, and the history of the Church was closely affected by the development of the State from a Heptarchy to a single monarchical State. "The bishops were members of the council of the realm to which they belonged and sat also in the local folkmoot with the prestige of wisdom and sanctity, with higher wergild and oath incontrovertible, but they did not become the counts or dukes of their dioceses, or entangle themselves with the secular intricacies of the divided and bewildered nation whose spiritual guides they were" (Stubbs, *Const. Hist.* i, p. 254). They had their councils national, or provincial, and at those "the presence of the Kings and earldormen seems to have been by no means unusual" (*Ib.* p. 264). Archbishop Theodore ordained that there should be an annual assembly held in August at Cloveshoo, but this rule, though "frequently observed as to place, does not seem to have prevailed as to time and frequency" (*Ib.* p. 265). They seem to have contented themselves with ecclesiastical legislation, and harmony prevailed between the ecclesiastical and lay councils; "the bishops were members" of the witan as well as of the ecclesiastical councils, "and did not hesitate to accept the confirmation of the national council to strengthen the pressure or increase the publicity of their enactments" (*Ib.* p. 265). "The relation of the Church to the State was close, although there was not the least confusion as to the

organisation of functions or uncertainty as to the limits of the powers of each. It was a state of things that could exist only in a race that was entirely homogeneous and becoming conscious of political unity (*Ib.* p. 265). The ruinous invasions of the Danes largely interfered with the continuity of the development of the Church, and when King Alfred and his successors undertook the reorganisation of the country, England came under the influence of the Church in France (*Ib.* p. 276), and "the distinctive character of the Anglo-Saxon Church, like that of her State, is being changed to the general pattern of the continental Churches. . . . The revival of life and energy under Dunstan and Elfric has worn itself out before the days of the Confessor. . . . The time has come for Lanfranc and Anselm as well as for William of Normandy and Henry of Anjou (*Ib.* p. 279).

It will not be necessary to describe in detail the changes ensuing upon the Norman conquest. We may be content with calling attention to three matters which had results of great importance.

William the Conqueror abolished the custom by which the bishops held pleas in the civil courts. He separated the jurisdictions of Church and State and forbade the ecclesiastical courts to deal with civil law; they had to use ecclesiastical law which was then beginning to grow into the system known as Canon Law. One of the effects of this change was to increase very greatly the influence of the Papacy in England. The State could prohibit the ecclesiastical courts from dealing with subjects which it claimed for its own, and it could do its best to prevent appeals to courts outside the realm.

But the exigencies of politics seriously affected the situation, and in effect the appellate jurisdiction of the Papacy increased.

The principle of representative government was asserted in the Convocations from a comparatively early date, so far as the House of Clergy was concerned. It appeared much about the same time in the constitution of Parliament, and was, of course, of great importance in determining the line on which the English State developed.

The Church succeeded in avoiding the inclusion of Convocation in Parliament. This may have been partly due to the existence of the Convocations of the two provinces, and partly to the dislike of the members of Convocation to the travelling necessary to attend Parliament. But it was certainly the intention of Edward I that Convocation should be a part of the Parliament of the whole nation, and in the writ by which a bishop is summoned to take his place in the House of Lords at a certain place and time, he is still instructed to secure that representatives of the clergy come with him. (The form of the writ of summons is printed in Anson, *Law and Custom of the Constitution*, vol. i, 4th ed., p. 56.) Bishop Stubbs thought that the clergy lost nothing of importance by their disappearance from Parliament. "If the clergy had been content to vote their taxes in Parliament instead of Convocation, they might have been involved in a perpetual struggle for equality with the commons, which would have left both at the mercy of the Crown, and baronage (*Const. Hist.* vol. ii, p. 213). The writers of the section of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State (p. 13) speak of it as

" the disastrous victory of withdrawal from Parliament to Convocation."

Of this constitution of Convocation Bishop Stubbs remarks (*Const. Hist.* vol. iii, p. 344) as follows : " The convocations of the two provinces, as the recognised constitutional assemblies of the English clergy, have undergone, except in the removal of the monastic members at the dissolution, no change of organisation from the reign of Edward I down to the present day." This statement requires modification in so far as the process of election of proctors has been changed by canon in 1921 ; but apart from comparatively small changes it seems to be true, and when we reflect upon it in the light of the history of the Church it shows how very complicated a position really underlies the constitution. It would seem the most natural and reasonable thing in the world for William the Conqueror to say that the two types of jurisdiction—of Church and of State—should act separately. But it is obvious that the rule is not so simple as it seems. Is there a sharp distinction traceable between the concerns of the Church and of the State ? Is it not more likely that almost every single case will have a double aspect and reference ? If we assume that the acceptance of the Creed is of the essence of Church membership, and if the Church claims to exclude from its society persons who do not follow its teaching, how are its sentences to be carried out ? Must not the State be expected to make things uncomfortable for the excommunicated, and if so, how ? Will the Church or the offender be prepared to allow an appeal to a State court, of which the judges need not be

specially qualified to try the issue ? In the Middle Ages these questions, as has already been noted, gave great support to the claims of the Pope to jurisdiction. Here was a court of appeal which, at any rate in theory, was concerned in the widest sense with the laws and observances which specially belonged to the Church. The Conqueror might say the Church must exercise jurisdiction only in its spiritual courts and in spiritual things. Kings might do their best to forbid appeals outside the country and keep all English Church matters within the realm—unless from time to time they found it convenient to invoke the Papal power in their own interest—but it was practically impossible in the system prevailing in the Middle Ages to translate this desire into practice.

The supremacy of the Pope has long ceased to exist so far as the English Church is concerned, and the problem which pressed upon the Middle Ages is not before us in the same form. Looking back, we surely seem to see one of the causes, at least, which led to so much disaster and schism. There is no *a priori* reason why Church, Crown and Papacy should not have worked together if they had been guided uniformly by a desire for the well-being of Christ's Church, without private interest and rivalries. The questions which arose were real questions. It is no mere matter of policy whether the Church should or should not have an effective voice in the selection and commission of its bishops ; nor can the Crown fail to have a considerable interest in the matter. It is not impossible that in a really articulate and catholic Church even an extra-territorial authority might have a voice.

But the quarrel over investiture ranged all the powers involved in conflict, and became a disruptive influence in the Church. Many other instances could be quoted in which the various elements in Church life which should work together fell apart through unnecessary and unchristian rivalry.

One of the parties to these disputes has, as has been said, disappeared so far as practical politics are concerned. But there is the same opening for discussion as there was before in the relations of the two remaining partners. The Crown has in some measure assumed prerogatives which were formerly claimed by the Pope ; the King is " in all causes as well ecclesiastical as temporal throughout his dominions supreme." So Art. xxxvii says " The King's Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of England, and other his dominions, unto whom the chief government of all Estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, doth appertain." It then proceeds : " When we attribute to the King's Majesty the chief government . . . we give not to our Princes the ministering either of God's Word or of the Sacraments . . . but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in Holy Scripture by God Himself ; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evildoers."

Behind all this there exist the same opportunities of difficulty as in the Middle Ages. Who is to settle what is and what is not in the province of the Church or of the Crown ? What is covered by

"that only prerogative" which has been given always to all godly Princes? If a man is charged with departing from the doctrine of the Church of England, how is he to be judged? In days of anxiety and new ideas and change, who is to settle what the doctrine of the Church of England ought to be? Over these and all such questions there hangs a cloud of difficulty, and the circumstances of the Church of England since the Reformation have given special acuteness to the difficulty. The Convocations have had little or no power. For more than a century they ceased to perform any functions at all. Yet they are bodies which are qualified to deal with doctrinal issues, and should have the power to discuss new points of view, to adapt the permanent message of the Church to new ideas and problems and to reach decisions. If they have not this power it is hard to see how the functions which we saw the Apostolic Church performing can be performed at all.

It has been said that a great deal of misfortune and disputing would have been saved if all the parties concerned had been always guided by a whole-hearted desire for the wellbeing of the Church and the full expression of its message. At the present moment this principle would be easily verified in experience. If Church and State, for instance, were actuated by no notions of rivalry or jealousy, but were alive with the single-minded desire to promote Christ's Kingdom, it might not be hard to arrange some principle of division of labour. But the lack of single-mindedness is not the only cause of difficulty and failure. There are difficulties arising from the nature of the subject

itself. Some few pages back it was noticed that in the earliest days changes in the circumstances of the Church, changes in the types of thought in which it had to express its ideas, involved new decisions on the part of the rulers of the Church—the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv) was one of these new expedients. It was a way of ascertaining the common mind by a wide consultation of the persons concerned, which common mind was assumed to be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts xv, 28). Strictly speaking, all the Councils that ever have been held do or should rest upon this idea. The method of summoning them, the sort of persons summoned, might vary on different occasions; the one thing needful is that they should speak in the name of the Church.

Let us look for a moment at one or two of the questions upon which the Church has expressed in some form a decided voice. There was no Council called in the earliest days to settle the list of books which might be read in Church and treated as Scripture. But Irenaeus shows how a consistent verdict gradually arose; the rivals to the canonical Gospels, of which specimens survive, were decisively set aside. When we read the fragments it is difficult to understand how anyone can ever have treated them seriously; but they were written, not as experiments in absurdity, but because they appeared to the minds of those who wrote them as more plausible than the canonical Gospels, and as supplying details which these books sadly lacked. They were rejected because they innovated upon the Church tradition; they had not behind them the witness of the apostolical Churches. Irenaeus

might say that there must be four and only four Gospels, because there are four and only four winds; but that was not the reason for the selection.

This was settled without a formal council; and if this seems to have been rash it is important to remember that in the middle of the second century the Church was much more of a single institution than it is now. It was a persecuted Church, and this helped to hold together those who really meant to be in the full sense Christians. Also the time separating the days of Irenaeus from those of the Apostles was not so very long: there cannot have been many links in the chain which joined Irenaeus with St. John. The chain seems thin and weak to us because the actual society and the persons in it with whom Irenaeus was associated have disappeared for ever. But we cannot rightly treat the evidence of Irenaeus or his official contemporaries as if they had no more knowledge of the Church in their times than we have. The society must have been a live thing with consciousness of itself and a clear tradition; it could deal with its problems without the formalities of a council.

In the first centuries, as has been said, the Church without a formal council, such as that of Nicea, contrived to deal with Gnosticism and protect its Creed as well as the Canon. When the Roman Empire recognised it as a *religio licita*, and gradually became Christian itself, the conciliar method of dealing with questions became possible and natural. Under the easier circumstances of the day it became possible to gather together a large number of bishops from various regions and debate theological problems. Such gatherings were still

governed by the faith of the Church. They had to determine which of many new suggestions and developments were consonant with its true meaning. The questions had come in from without in many cases, and produced doubts and divisions within; the councils acting on the common opinion of the Church were aimed at clearing up the doubts. In some ways the more kindly interest of the imperial authorities was an advantage: it made it easier, for instance, for the bishops to travel to the place of meeting. But it soon became clear, though unfortunately not sufficiently so to the Church, that the imperial interest might easily become embarrassing, when it took sides and used its power to coerce minorities. The responsibility for preserving the true tradition of the faith was, in theory, laid upon the bishops, and they were the signatories of the Council's decrees. Imperial coercion of recalcitrants made no difference in this.

In the Western Church the imperial conception of a single community with a single ruler dominated increasingly its history. Just before the Reformation the position was definitely challenged, when the question was raised whether a General Council could supersede the Pope. The break-up of the whole mediæval system, of which this question was one symptom brought the world abruptly into a new atmosphere. The European nations stand out as separate entities, and, though those who belong to the Roman obedience still look to the Pope as final arbiter in all ecclesiastical matters, the whole mediæval ideal of unity has ceased to be practically effective. It could, of course, be restored if the various nations concerned were

willing to be reconciled to Rome, but there is not any strong probability of this solution, and the question for us in England is how we can adjust the ancient conceptions of Church order to the facts of the present day.

The King is supreme over all causes as well ecclesiastical as temporal. Article xxxvii, as we have seen, excludes from the operation of this supremacy " the ministering of either God's word or the Sacraments." Yet he summons the Convocations and they have no power to draft or to promulge canons without the licence of the Crown.*

If any subject complains of denial of justice he appeals to the King's Court. A conspicuous illustration of this was the appeal of the " Wee Free" Church in Scotland against a resolution of the Assembly of the Free Church, and this particular case emphasises the fact that the action of the Crown is not restricted to an established Church. But the decision of the House of Lords in this case resulted in an Act of Parliament (5 Edw. 7 c. 12) which did more than modify the decision of the House of Lords. Clause 5 of the Act lays down a rule as to the formula of subscription to the Confession of Faith which has very wide provisions. It deals with the Church of Scotland " as by law

*There is a curious note dated 14th February, 1894, in Archbishop Benson's *Life* (vol. 2, p. 560) about the position of Convocation. It appears that in 1894 no writ was issued summoning Convocation. The Archbishop made inquiry that the reason of the omission was that the Convocation had been prorogued by himself till 24th April. " As it never was prorogued by the Queen our Session continues, and on 24th April we can sit. I have got this from the Lord Chancellor (Lord Herschell) in writing. But it may form a curious precedent in two ways : (1) It is not of necessity that Convocation should be prorogued when Parliament is ; (2) the Archbishop's prorogation is recognised as determining the meeting, irrespective of any other document."

established " and provides that " the formula of subscription to the Confession of Faith required from ministers and preachers of the Church of Scotland as by law established . . . shall be such as may be prescribed by Act of the General Assembly of the said Church with the consent of the majority of the presbyteries thereof." This provision takes us a long way and goes far to meet the difficulties which are apt to arise between the Church and the State. The real source of these difficulties is this—the Church is a living body with a doctrine to preach and a code of moral life to maintain. At different times in its history it has given form to its creed and its ethic. When it comes before the Courts there is always a danger that its duty of adaptation to new conditions of life may be denied to it, and it may be held to be bound to formulæ which, for one reason or another, do not fit the circumstances of a new age. It is probable, for instance, that all those who drew up the Articles and the questions in the Ordinal to candidates for Ordination believed in the literal inerrancy of the Holy Scripture. If a man, in the light of modern knowledge, were to find himself unable to sustain this position he might still profess " an unfeigned belief in the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament." The Church, if it has freedom to apply its message to new ages and their problems, might accept this situation. But a Court, if it were in the mind of the House of Lords in the " Wee Free " case, might easily condemn such exercise of freedom, and the reason for this would be that the Church and the State approach these matters from different points of

view. The Church claims, and we may suppose must continue to claim, its right to determine as a Spirit-bearing body the way in which its teaching must be expressed from time to time. The State, the more strictly it keeps to the legal point of view, must inevitably tend to regard any utterances of the Church in the past as literally final and beyond interpretation.

The Convocations, which have survived so long with so little change, are still the instrument of expression of the clergy, and to them is still given the function of teaching the faith and the duty of special study of it. But even here new times bring new needs. In the Middle Ages the laity were very largely uneducated; this has completely changed. They are no longer persons upon whom a rule of faith and practice may be blindly imposed, and we see that, throughout the English Church, wherever it exists, there is a tendency to associate a House of Laymen with the Clerical Houses. They have not the power to determine doctrinal issues, in most cases, but they are competent in a variety of ways within the order of the Church. And it is necessary that they should be Churchmen, that is to say, persons who find their religious home in the faith and order of the Church of England, and not merely persons who are not aware of holding any other faith. It is, surely, not impossible that the English Church, whether established or not, may find its way to a policy which not only preserves characteristics which are peculiar to it in the English countries, but also maintains its position as a living body with a loyalty to the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the world.

VI. THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE LAITY

SYNOPSIS

THE effect of the revival of Convocation—Motion tabled by the Rev. R. Seymour in support of lay co-operation in Synod—opponents jealous of any encroachment upon the prerogatives of Convocation—Henry Hoare : his passion for lay co-operation embodied in the Diocesan Conference—The Queen, Prince Consort and Lord Derby and lay representation —Mr. Hoare's plan of organisation—The futility of unauthorised assemblies—Westcott's Memorial on Church Reform well-timed and yet belated—Proposal for a House of Laymen occupied Convocation from 1870–1885—Suspicion centred in the relation of the new body to " faith and doctrine "—Scheme piloted by the Dean of Windsor—The part afterwards played by him as Archbishop Davidson—The qualifications and limited functions of the members of the new House—Creation of a House of Laymen—Its action in connection with the Bull of Leo XIII—Resolution moved in Canterbury House of Laymen which led to the setting up of the Representative Church Council in 1904—Resolution on Church and State carried in Representative Church Council—Committee on Church and State leads to Enabling Bill—Its effect—Lay House of Church Assembly not yet representative—Claim that the Assembly has behind it a constituency comparable to the Parliamentary electorate not yet substantiated, but lay element in Church's Parliament has offered fine example of regular attendance, interested receptivity and Christian charity.

VI

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE LAITY

By E. H. Pearce, sometime Bishop of Worcester

IT was inevitable that the revival of Convocation in the earlier years of Queen Victoria's reign should give encouragement to those who desired to see laymen taking a more considerable part in the affairs of the Church. It was also inevitable that Convocation, thus revived, should be increasingly conscious of its prerogatives and jealous of any encroachment. It took over sixty years to bring about an amicable fusion of the two tendencies, and it is the purpose of our story to indicate the course which the struggle followed. It would seem that the first formal step was taken by the Rev. Richard Seymour*, who was elected a proctor for the clergy of the Diocese of Worcester in 1852. In the session of April 1856 he tabled the following motion :—

> That an address be respectfully presented to His Grace the President, and to their Lordships of the Upper House of Convocation, requesting their Lordships to take into consideration the following propositions :—
>
> 1. That the Law of God, as revealed in Holy Scripture for the government of His Church, and as witnessed to by primitive antiquity, while it vested the authority and power to govern,

* Rector of Kinwarton, Warwickshire, and afterwards Canon of Worcester ; father of the late Archdeacon of Barnstaple and Admiral Sir Ed. Seymour.

primarily, in the spiritualty, does not forbid, rather does it encourage, them to call and admit faithful laymen also to their councils in Synod, at such times and in such manner as they shall judge best for the welfare of the Church.

2. That the circumstances of the present times present certain urgent reasons why the Church of England, in taking steps for the renewal of her Synodal functions, should take advantage of this liberty, and should provide some more formal and regular opportunities than at present exist, whereat the counsel and co-operation of the faithful laity may be secured to the proceedings of Convocation.

Canon Seymour's speech needs to be read at length*, for only the gist of it can be given here. Of course, he found the origin of synodical action and of lay co-operation in Acts xv and the Council at Jerusalem, and he insisted that the consent of the " brethren " to the decrees involved " some exercise of their understandings and their judgments." He took his hearers, as Benson did long afterwards, to Cyprian's Letters. He reminded them of the ancient councils in England, in which clergy and laity sat together, and in which, if spiritual matters came up for discussion, the spiritualty might, indeed, confer by themselves, but would then bring their conclusions to the laity for their approval. It was true, he admitted, that they must be careful to choose laymen who are *bona fide* Churchmen, but, having been so chosen, let them be admitted without restrictions or reservations. Let them be " a third order in the

* Chronicle of Convocation, 1847–57, pp. 357–75.

Convocation," sitting either separately or with the Lower House, and voting as a House by themselves. Let questions of doctrine be initiated only by the Bishops or the Lower House, but, when a decision has there been reached, let the same questions be submitted to the laity.

There were many compliments, as the debate proceeded, to the lucidity of this opening speech. What it really merited was some testimony to its courage; for it fluttered the dovecotes mightily. There followed amendments and the previous question, a comparatively mild outburst from Archdeacon Denison and a hostile dissertation on Acts xv from Christopher Wordsworth, who thought that they should make more use of churchwardens and sidesmen, but that, if in such a proposal as Mr. Seymour's they did not proceed with the utmost caution, "there would be an end to them as a House of Convocation." So the whole question obtained its quietus for a time. It was well, men said, that it should, for it was apt to make folk nervous.

But Canon Wordsworth, in the course of his speech, said that he had "recently learned from a zealous layman that the experiment of lay-co-operation had been made in the county of Kent with good prospects of success."* There is not much question that he was referring to Henry Hoare, who merits more than a passing mention in this connection. It is not merely that he is the eponymous hero of the Hall which has long been the chamber of the House of Laymen, or that his portrait hangs on its wall, or that there is a not very

* Chronicle of Convocation, 1847–57, p. 530.

elegantly phrased tribute to his memory on the coloured glass of the great window. A boy-friend of Samuel Wilberforce but a Cambridge graduate, he grew up in that sense of the oneness of the Church which emanated from the Oxford Movement; and he developed two passions—one for the revival of Convocation, which he witnessed, and the other for what he called lay co-operation, of which the embodiment was the Diocesan Conference, and which he survived to see only as a voluntary organisation in certain dioceses without any legislative sanction. In these two causes he belaboured an unwilling Primate with correspondence and addressed innumerable meetings throughout the country. It has even been suggested that his plans were somehow communicated to the Prince Consort. Anyhow there is on record the Prince's memorandum of an audience which the Queen gave to Lord Derby on February 27th, 1852.* This audience was not by any means the Prince's first introduction to the subject. A year earlier, at Windsor Castle, he had drawn up a "Memorandum on the Church Crisis," in which he laid down an "intelligible and sound principle" after this sort:—

> That the laity have an equal share of authority in the Church with the clergy.
>
> That no alteration in the form of divine service shall therefore be made by the clergy without the formal consent of the laity.
>
> Nor any interpretation given of Articles of Faith without their concurrence.†

* Buckle, *Letters of Queen Victoria*, II, 456.
† Martin, *Life of the Prince Consort*, II, 343.

But now in 1852 Lord Derby gave his view that the disputes in the Church would not be settled by a revival of Convocation, but rather " by some Assembly representing the laity as well as the clergy." The Prince Consort expressed agreement, but with this prophetic proviso—that " the Constitution was built up from the bottom, giving the vestries a legislative character in the parishes leading up to Diocesan Assemblies, and finally to a general one."

Mr. Hoare's plan was roughly that to which we have since become accustomed. He wanted each rural deanery to have a Conference as well as a Chapter ; he wanted the lay members of these Conferences to produce lay members for Diocesan Conferences ; and he wanted a Lay House to result from election by the lay members of all the Diocesan Conferences. The two preliminary stages made some little progress in his lifetime, though Diocesan Conferences spread slowly. One of the most revered and efficient of my predecessors, Dr. Philpott, firmly declined to summon such a conference in the Diocese of Worcester, and no Bishop was ever more completely trusted and admired by his lay folk. The delay and the difficulty centred in the apparent futility of amateur and unauthorised assemblies, and in the fact that the subordinate bodies—parochial, ruridecanal, diocesan—led no whither, had no ultimate goal. What retarded progress was the lack of a representative lay house at the top of things. And the reason was that Convocation could not make up its mind what to do with these representatives of the laity, even if it had them.

So let us return to Convocation. In 1870 both Provinces, at the instigation of the Northern, agreed to appoint a committee to consider

> whether, without invading the spiritual or constitutional rights and duties of Convocation, any, and if any what, methods might be devised for obtaining the sanction and assistance of the laity in matters designed to promote the interests of our holy religion, and the welfare of the Church as now by law established.

The report of the Lower House Committee, signed by Canon Richard Seymour on January 9, 1872, is a valuable *locus* on the slow progress of a movement which could not be altogether stayed. It passes in review the voyage of lay co-operation through the quiet waters of parochial, ruridecanal and diocesan assemblies, but it has to bring it out at last into the more troubled seas of provincial assemblies, that is, of Convocation. The summoning of Provincial Synods was seen to be conditioned by the Act of Submission. These Synods could only be summoned by authority of the King's Writ, and the Writ says "the whole Clergy." Could they, then, get the terms of the Writ altered so as to include laymen? Only by authority of Parliament. Should they apply to Parliament for such alteration? No, says the report, the desired co-operation of laymen had better be "otherwise obtained," and then they proceed to say how. There should be a Provincial House of Laymen, elected by the laymen of the Diocesan Conferences, with arrangements by which delegates of the House of Clergy could give explanations to the House of

Laymen and *vice versa ;* before licence was asked for any Canon and before Parliament was approached about any Bill, the subject-matter in either case should be submitted to and approved by the House of Laymen ; while by means of a petition to the Archbishop the Lay House could bring before the Provincial Synod any matters ecclesiastical which seemed to it to require consideration. When it is added that to these men of 1870 it appeared that what they called the " palmary precedent of the Jerusalem Council " demanded the formal communication of all decisions of the Provincial Synod to the lay representatives for their consent, it can be realised that our present constitution seemed to be not far off, especially as the report closed with a suggestion that the two Provinces, with their laymen, might meet on a national basis.

But there it was and there it remained, only needing a fresh impulse from somewhere.

And it came to pass, after an interval of thirteen years, that the needful and long-delayed impetus came from the University of Cambridge, though the present writer, then in the first term of his second year, was in blissful ignorance of these great searchings of heart among the seniors. Westcott, then Regius Professor of Divinity, drew up a memorial to the two Archbishops on Church Reform, and forwarded it to Benson on December 14, 1885*, saying that it had received a welcome from representatives of all schools of thought in the University, " to which I know no parallel." The memorial complained, as all Churchmen were complaining, of the " serious injury " which the

* A. Westcott, *Life and Letters of Bishop Westcott*, i, 414, f.

Church suffered "from the postponement of necessary reforms," and for our purpose its main contention is thus described :—

> The reform which we believe to be most urgently needed is a more complete development of the constitution and government of the Church—central, diocesan, and parochial ; and especially the admission of laymen of all classes, who are *bona fide* Churchmen, to a substantial share in the control of Church affairs.

This memorial reached Lambeth at a critical moment in the Church's life. There were threats of Disestablishment from outside; schemes for the reform of Church patronage (not for the last time) were the cause of constant disappointment and delay in spite of the first Earl of Selborne's invaluable help and sympathy ;* Parliament was increasingly dilatory or hostile, where ecclesiastical legislation was concerned. So the memorial was well-timed.

Yet in a sense, it was also belated. The whole question of a House of Laymen had again been occupying the two Houses of Convocation during 1885, and there was much going and coming between the Board Room of Queen Anne's Bounty, where the Bishops sat, and the "Hall of St. Peter's College, Westminster," which was then at the disposal of the Lower House. The constitution of the Provincial House of Laymen was set forth in ten resolutions and a proviso. There were those in the Lower House who did not like the thing at all. Listen, for instance, to Canon Gregory. We

* *Cf.* Sir Lewis Dibdin's statement in A. C. Benson's *Life* of his father, ii. 71, ff.

in Convocation, said he, may speak of the House of Laymen, but the public prints have already spoken of it as the Lay House of Convocation. We are determined not to destroy Convocation, and we have no intention of making " a brand-new Brummagem House of Clergy and Laymen."* The chief suspicion in such minds centred in the relation of the new body to " faith and doctrine," and the chief bone of contention was Clause 8, which at first ran as follows :—

> That the subjects on which the House of Laymen may be consulted shall be all subjects which ordinarily occupy the attention of Convocation, saving only those which shall be judged specially to touch faith and morals.

Canon Gregory carried as a substitute for the last clause the words " saving only the definition or interpretation of the faith and doctrine of the Church." To make assurance doubly sure, the Lower House, with Gregory's support, added a proviso in these words :—

> Provided that nothing in this scheme shall be held to prejudice the duties, rights or privileges of this sacred Synod according to the laws and usages of this Church and Realm.

It is surely of interest to note that the Dean of Windsor, who so skilfully piloted the bark of the scheme through the Gregorian mine-field, was that Randall Davidson who, forty-two years later, was to receive at Lambeth an important deputation from the House of Laymen, legally constituted, who came

* Chronicle of Convocation, 1885, p. 250.

to give the Bishops their views on certain matters connected with Prayer Book Revision, and who surely did not eschew all questions that could be "judged especially to touch faith and doctrine." Moreover, it was the same Randall Davidson who, as President of the Church Assembly, put the proposed Revision of the Prayer Book to the vote of the three Houses, voting separately, and every layman, as he gave his vote, knew quite well that that vote must needs concern itself with doctrine, whether he believed, as some did, that there was a change of doctrine, or whether he held, with a much larger number, that there was only a change of emphasis.

So the resolutions about the House of Laymen passed from the Lower House to the Upper, where again the discussion turned chiefly upon No. 8 as modified by Canon Gregory's amendment. Benson, who would have heard from the Dean of Windsor all that had happened in College Hall, made genial play with the timidity of the Lower House. We Bishops, he said, know what the laymen of the Church of England are, and we realise what we owe to them better than these good presbyters. But he urged that, considering its state of nervousness and its narrower experience, the Lower House had done its best to meet the views of the bishops, and that the scheme had better be accepted as it stood. His colleagues agreed with him. Even the proviso was accepted. Bishop Temple, indeed, called it "surplusage." Ah, said the President, but "it has a very handsome sound."*

What, then, did these regulations portend, besides keeping the laymen to their proper sphere?

* Chronicle of Convocation, 1885, p. 273, f.

The members of the new house were to be communicants of the Church of England, and their *rôle* was to confer with the members of Convocation. They were to be chosen, as now, by lay members of the Diocesan Conferences (ten from London ; six from Winchester, Rochester, Lichfield and Worcester ; four each from the rest). They were to be convened by the President of Convocation. They were to sit only during the sessions of Convocation and their proceedings were to be opened by the President, who should invite them to confer with the Upper and Lower Houses as and when he thought fit, and lay before them any subject upon which he desired their counsel.

It seemed little enough to offer to these keen laymen—the opportunity to come together for a limited period three times in a year to discuss topics which were put before them by the Archbishop ; to be called into conference when they were wanted ; and to know all the time that the limit of their powers was advice, and no more. It seemed little enough to those who realised that Convocation had then been considering the matter for years. Nevertheless, it resulted in the creation of a House of Laymen, which met on February 16, 1886, and Benson, not without a reference to Cyprian, opened the proceedings. Nonconformists in Parliament were ready with anxious questions. Was the Archbishop forming a " Third House of Convocation " ? Was he not incurring penalties under the Act of Submission ? Benson records that he duly ordered the archiepiscopal barge to be in readiness to take him to the Tower, but that his statement to the House of Commons through the Home

Secretary was so far satisfying that the barge could be countermanded.*

So here was a Lay House in being, summoned regularly by the President at the same time as Convocation, representative of such English laymen as had a place in Diocesan Conferences, presided over by the ripest lawyer and one of the keenest Churchmen of his time, the first Earl of Selborne, whose grandson takes his rightful part in this volume. *Uno avulso, non deficit alter.* The Cambridge dons had urged through Westcott that what was needed was "especially the admission of laymen of all classes, who are *bona fide* Churchmen, to a substantial share in the control of Church affairs." In two large respects the new House failed to meet these requirements. It could not be said to represent " all classes " and there was little substance in its " control." The members in attendance were those who could afford to attend, and there was no legislative authority to encourage their regular presence.

In the course of the years that preceded the next change, the Lay House exercised its limited functions to the great advantage of the Church. It by no means avoided all questions of doctrine. For instance, there was the Bull *Apostolicæ Curæ*, in which, on September 13th, 1896, Pope Leo XIII denied the validity of Anglican Orders, together with the *Responsio Archiepiscoporum Angliæ*, dated February 19th, 1897. Questions of doctrine—and this clearly was one such—can, it had been constantly insisted, be initiated only by the Spiritualty. But could the Lay House be expected to pass over

* A. C. Benson, *Life*, ii, 112.

in silence so crucial a matter as this? If it was discussed at all, how could the members avoid using upon it what Canon Seymour would have called "their understandings and their judgments?" Well, Mr. Spottiswoode proposed that the Lay House should thank its Archbishop for the *Responsio*. But the "understandings" went to work, and it soon appeared that there were some there—as there are some still—who regretted certain contentions of the *Responsio* as being in their view doubtful statements of the Anglican position. To thank the Archbishop for the reply might seem a condonation of those statements. But, after all, we are loyal laymen, said the House, and, if we cannot all subscribe to all the contents, we can all applaud the spirited action. Let us thank his Grace for replying.

Mostly, however, the Lay House clave earnestly to the task in hand, which was to devise some means by which substance could be given to its authority as a now recognised element in the life and opinion of the Church. In the same year, 1897, the Canterbury House of Laymen crystallised its ambitions in the shape of the following resolution:—

> That in the opinion of this House the Church of England should, saving the supremacy of the Crown and subject to the veto of Parliament, have freedom for self-regulation by means of reformed Convocations, with the assistance, in matters other than the definition of the faith and doctrine of the Church, of a representative body or bodies of the faithful laity.

Awkwardly expressed, and obviously not the first

draft, this resolution was sufficient reference for a committee which reported in due course and whose report led the House to this further stage :—

> That whenever legislative sanction is sought for the securing to the Church of larger powers of self-regulation, such powers should first have been considered and defined by representative assemblies of Churchmen, both clergy and laity.

This resolution contained the germ of the Representative Church Council, which came into being in 1904, after its powers and constitution had been defined at a joint meeting of the Convocations and of the Lay Houses of both Provinces.

It was this body which on July 4th, 1913, came to the almost unanimous resolution that led on to the situation as it now exists. The words of it are as follows, and they show quite clearly that the question of " lay co-operation " had now broadened out into the more general question of the relations between Church and State :—

> That there is in principle no inconsistency between a national recognition of religion and the spiritual independence of the Church ; and the Council requests the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to consider the advisability of appointing a Committee to inquire what changes are advisable in order to secure in the relations of Church and State a fuller expression of the spiritual independence of the Church as well as of the national recognition of religion.

In consequence of this resolution the Archbishops

appointed their momentous Committee on Church and State—twenty-six Churchmen, of whom seventeen were laymen. Their report, which consisted of 300 pages and was not dated, appeared in 1916. It led steadily on to the Enabling Legislation of 1919, and, indeed, itself included a draft of the Enabling Bill. With the acceptance of that Bill by Parliament our story of the modern development of the idea of "lay co-operation" may be allowed to close. It is reasonably complete, except that it deals with causes and omits to mention the names of many of those to whom the result was chiefly due.

It remains to consider how far the Enabling Legislation has had the effect of bringing the great body of Church people into conscious and close touch with the life and administration of the Church. Let it be admitted that the underlying theory is admirable. The upward progress from membership of an electoral roll through parochial, ruri-decanal and diocesan assemblies to the Church Assembly is unbroken and complete. Every private on the roll carries a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack. It may be said that eleven years is hardly time enough to change privates into marshals. Anyhow, it cannot yet be said that the Church Assembly, in respect of its Lay House, has become clearly representative of the larger life of our people. If such sorry catchwords can be pardoned, it still consists rather of the classes than of the masses. It is possible that here and there arrangements are afoot for providing wage-earning members not only with their out-of-pocket charges but also with the equivalent of their wages during

the period of the sessions. But in the main the lay membership of the Assembly is still of too restricted a character to enable us to flatter ourselves that here is a body which represents the great body of the faithful more adequately than does the House of Commons. Any Church may be proud to have such lay-folk as a constituent element in its special Parliament—peers, privy councillors, Conservative members of Parliament, magistrates, squires, chairmen and vice-chairmen of Diocesan Boards of Finance, bishops' wives* and daughters, parsons' wives, professors, diocesan chancellors—they are the very salt of the dioceses from which they come. But the Assembly, and in particular its third House, was set up because Parliament is too cumbered with other things to give the rightful attention to ecclesiastical legislation, and because the Church claims to have behind the Assembly a constituency comparable to, though not conterminous with, the electorate which sends members to the House of Commons. But that claim has still to be made good. It may be that the franchise was too narrowly drawn ; it may be that electoral rolls are not compiled with a desire to bring in those whose interest is real, though their churchmanship is less obvious ; it may be that the system of electing so many lay members from each diocese, as it were in a lump, is fatal to that specific interest in " our member," which means so much to a man who

*The bishop's wife seems to be as much a feature of the new Lay House as of the former ; indeed in one case the wife of the diocesan is returned and the wife of a suffragan. It is, of course, open to question whether this tends to strengthen the episcopal vote or to modify the laical vote ; but, in a thickly populated diocese, entitled to return eleven members, it seems a curious method of broadening the basis of lay representation.

has reached the House of Commons. Whatever the reasons of the apparent failure, whatever the modifications that the system ought still to receive, no one will question that the lay element in the Church's Parliament has made a brave effort to assert its view, and has offered to the other sections of the House a fine example of regular attendance, of interested receptivity, and above all of Christian charity towards one another.

VII. THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND PARLIAMENT

SYNOPSIS

THE circumstances of the working of the Enabling Act described—Two main points should be noted—There can be no hasty legislation—Parliament retains right to give or withhold consent—Especial recognition was given to the latter by Church authorities—This has resulted in double Prayer Book rejection—History of authority given to the various Prayer Books from 1549 onwards—Parliament never consisted entirely of Church people—The English lay folk have always been very independent about religious matters, before the Reformation as well as after—Parliament was and is the sole legislative organ, and the attitude adopted recently is merely a continuation of the historical claim of the laity from the earliest times in England—But all do not hold this view—Statements of theology are reserved to the ecclesiastical authority—The representation of the laity in the Church Assembly is not really adequate—The law as declared by Parliament ought to be observed, and evasion of it is wrong —The lay people may and should refuse to follow the hierarchy if it takes the wrong course.

VII

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND PARLIAMENT

By Sir Lewis Dibdin

THE Enabling Act (1919) enacts that a Measure dealing with matters concerning the Church of England shall have the force of an Act of Parliament under certain circumstances.

These circumstances are as follows :

1. A Measure must pass the Church Assembly in accordance with a Constitution recognised by the Enabling Act. The lay members of the Church Assembly are elected in each diocese by the lay members of the Diocesan Conference. The lay members of the Diocesan Conference are elected (in most cases) by the lay members of the Ruridecanal Conference. Each of the lay members of the Ruridecanal Conference is elected (in most cases) by the Annual Church Meeting of his or her parish. All persons on the electoral roll of a parish have a right to attend and vote at this annual meeting. Any person who is at least 18, and is a member of the Church of England, and does not belong to any religious body not in communion with the Church of England, is entitled, on his or her application, to be on the electoral roll. It will be seen that the electoral roll is the basis of a series of steps leading up to lay membership of the Church Assembly. The whole number (about 347) of lay members form the House of Laity.

The clerical members of the Church Assembly

are elected by the clergy of each diocese voting for their own members. The whole number (about 323) of clerical members form the House of Clergy.

All diocesan bishops (now 43) are members of the Church Assembly, and form the House of Bishops.

2. The Legislative Committee (now 25) is appointed under the Constitution of the Assembly from the members of all three Houses of the Assembly.

After a Measure has passed the Assembly it is submitted to the Ecclesiastical Committee by the Legislative Committee with such comments as the Legislative Committee or the Assembly itself may deem expedient.

3. The Ecclesiastical Committee is provided for by the Enabling Act. It consists of fifteen members of the House of Lords nominated by the Lord Chancellor, and fifteen members of the House of Commons nominated by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

The Ecclesiastical Committee is appointed at the commencement of each Parliament. The Ecclesiastical Committee (after a Measure has been submitted to it by the Legislative Committee) considers the Measure and prepares a report to Parliament either at once or after conference with the Legislative Committee if that Committee so desires. It is important to note that neither the Legislative Committee nor the Ecclesiastical Committee nor Parliament can alter a Measure in any particular.

4. If the Legislative Committee wishes the Ecclesiastical Committee's report to go to Parliament,

it and the Measure are laid before the two Houses of Parliament.

5. If a resolution is passed in each House to the effect that the Measure should be presented to His Majesty, it is so presented, and on the Royal Assent being signified thereto it has the force and effect of an Act of Parliament.

Two very important points arise out of these rather complicated provisions of the Constitution of the Church Assembly and the Enabling Act. First, the greatest care has been taken not only that there should be no hasty legislation, but also that so far as possible the Church Assembly should fully and adequately represent bishops, clergy and laity, and that every Measure should owe its contents, simply and only, to Church action without the slightest taint of what might be called an Erastian origin. Secondly, the Enabling Act gives an entirely unfettered power to each House of Parliament to give or withhold consent to a Measure. If that consent is withheld in either House the Measure falls to the ground.

Archbishop Davidson, as Primate, was in charge of the Enabling Bill in the House of Lords. His insistence on the extent and continuance of this power was emphatic and repeated. For example, the Archbishop said, " May I call your Lordships' attention to the fact that Parliamentary power without the intervention at all of this Bill remains exactly what it was." Again, " Parliament retains its right not only in theory but in fact." And again, " Remember that these powers [*i.e.*, in the Enabling Act] are definitely and in set terms

limited by Parliament in each individual case of their exercise."

When Lord Finlay moved to amend the Enabling Bill by substituting a positive motion made in each House of Parliament for the negative process of allowing the Assembly's Measures to pass after "lying on the table" for so many days without an adverse motion having been carried, the Archbishop at once accepted the amendment. He said, "I believe it to be right. I want to make it perfectly clear that in no sense whatever do we desire to get things through Parliament in some private or unrecognised manner or that they should slip through because there is no time to oppose them."

It is perhaps well to add that never since the sixteenth century, at any rate, has any general law which includes both clergy and laity in its action been passed without direct Parliamentary authority.

It is undeniable that the recent divergence of view as to the revised Prayer Book between the Church Assembly and the House of Commons has created a great impression on the people of this country, and a great many men and women who had either taken the union of the Church and State as a matter of course, or had never thought about it at all, have been very seriously upset on the one hand by bishops seeming to disregard the decisions of Parliament, and on the other hand by the spectacle of a House of Commons consisting of members of many different religions and of no religion, yet legislating as to the forms of public worship of the Church of England.

The revised Prayer Book has been before the Assembly and Parliament twice. The 1927 Book

was passed in the Assembly by 517 to 133 votes. In the Lords it was approved by 241 to 88 votes. But in the Commons it was rejected by 247 to 205 votes. The 1928 Book was passed in the Assembly by 396 to 153 votes. It was not submitted to the Lords. But in the Commons it was rejected by 266 to 220 votes. The question of the propriety of the House of Commons voting on such a question as the revised Prayer Book, which may contain many important changes—both books certainly contained one matter of first class religious importance—must largely depend on the religious belief of the members and of those they represent. This has varied from time to time. But, just as now the House of Commons contains and represents persons who are Church people, persons who are Christians but not Church people and persons who are non-Christians, so it has always contained and has always represented non-Church people as well as others. Suppose, for example, that the House of Commons to-day consisted of and represented Church people only, its rejection of the revised Prayer Book would not startle people more than an adverse vote by the lay members of the Assembly. Yet the members of the Commons would be voting not as part of a Church body but as the State. Is this right ?

We are faced, to start with, by the undoubted fact that our present Prayer Book has been legalised to a large extent by the action of Parliament and not by the action of the Church. The first Prayer Book of Edward VI was in 1549. It was certainly set up by the first Act of Uniformity. It may have had the consent of Convocation. It is very doubtful,

and the trend of modern research is against that notion. The second Prayer Book of Edward VI had, so far as is known, Parliamentary sanction only. The Prayer Book of Elizabeth had Parliamentary sanction only. The Prayer Book of James I had neither Parliamentary nor synodical sanction, but was issued by the King. The Prayer Book of Charles II had the approval of Convocation, and the Commons, when the last Act of Uniformity was passed, resolved by a majority that, although they could consider the Prayer Book in detail, they would not do so. This is the short story of all the Prayer Books.

What is the meaning of it? Plainly it does not mean that men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were indifferent to the contents of their Prayer Books. Equally plainly it does not mean that then, any more than now, the whole House of Commons consisted of Church people. Take the 1662 House of Commons—for this purpose the most important. Without saying too much about the eager assertions of horrified people on the morrow of the Commons' rejection of the recent Prayer Book, it is fair to believe that there is no instructed person to-day who does not know that the House of Commons in 1662 contained many non-Churchmen; how many, whether 20 or 50 or 60, it would be rash to speculate. The City of London was represented by two Dissenters. The House contained rather more than 500 members. Whatever may be the right of individual members and whatever precedents may teach, the question whether Christian nonconformists ought now to meddle with the teaching of the Church of England is one of taste

rather than of right; and it is fair to remember that the Church of England is still the National Church, as by law established.

The Romish Church has an easy answer to questions of this sort. The Church of England, when it finally broke away from the Pope in the sixteenth century, went out into the wilderness, and has wandered homeless ever since. Let it return to the old allegiance and once more there will be consistency.

But what has happened to the Prayer Book throughout well illustrates the special peculiarity of the English people. Not merely since the sixteenth century but always, the English people, devotedly attached to Christianity, has shown an independence in its belief and in its practice which no other nation within the Roman obedience has ever equalled. If the Papal archives were searched probably many Papal letters and remonstrances would be found like that of Gregory XI (1370-8), in which he sadly refers to the glorious past of the English realm and compares it bitterly with its then present undutifulness.

Within very broad limits we have always had our say as to what we should believe. Parliament has been regarded not as wholly, but as chiefly, Christian, and still more as representing the great mass of the people who, whether Church people or not, have been Christians. Until, by the action of Parliament under the Enabling Act, the Church Assembly brought laymen into its discussions, the English people, as a whole, had no legislative machinery, even for matters of religion, except that of Parliament. The clerical Convocations, altogether

silent from 1717 to 1852, had neither the competence nor the prestige for real legislation. Certainly the mass of lay people have never trusted them to that extent, and were long ago held not to be bound by their decisions.

It is impossible to disguise from ourselves that Parliament is becoming more and more secular, but, so far at any rate, there has been no break of continuity. Every sitting of each House begins with prayer to Almighty God, and every King's Speech invokes the Divine aid on Parliament's deliberations. Nevertheless, for the last sixty years at least, Parliament has considered itself too busy with other matters to pay much attention to ecclesiastical administration. It redounds therefore to the credit of Parliament that not only was the Enabling Act passed, but that, throughout the ten years of the Assembly's history, Parliament has not only shown no jealousy but real sympathy. It has approved 40 out of the 44 Measures sent up to it. Out of the remaining four, two were the Prayer Book Measures. It is fair to add that the great administrative Measures passed, have been conceived and debated with far closer knowledge in the Assembly than would have been possible in Parliament. It ought also to be said that the terrible deadlock of the last half-century has been removed, and that most of the much-needed reforms—and no man worked harder or more hopelessly for them than Archbishop Benson—are now in operation.

But the use of Parliament for the purpose of exercising the power of the Christian laity in such a matter as the Prayer Book is only one of a

long series of examples with which history is, so to speak, strewn. History, as the record of all human affairs must be, is a very mixed affair. Very often it was money that was the bone of contention. Sometimes it was the Papal pretension of sending bulls to England without leave. Sometimes it was the detested method of promoting foreigners to English bishoprics and preferments. Sometimes it was the Papal claim to try English priests for ecclesiastical offences. Sometimes it was spiritual teaching, banned by the Pope but protected by great men in England. Wycliffe, notwithstanding that his arrest was peremptorily ordered by the Pope, died peacefully in his bed at Lutterworth. And although the Lollards went so far that they shocked the English hierarchy and were persecuted for their views, there is no reason to doubt that their religious ideas, or some of them, were held far and wide by the people (perhaps secretly) right down to the Reformation.

The Reformation itself, remarkable as it was, constituted a continuation of what had been going on long before. So far as Henry VIII was concerned, his action had little to do with religious teaching. The Pope had claimed the power of *external* jurisdiction by which a man was tried. The Pope had also, as the supreme bishop, conferred, directly or by devolution, on the clergy (as to some powers on bishops only) what is sometimes called the power of the Keys, namely (1) power of *inner* jurisdiction, and (2) power of order. These powers included power to ordain, to excommunicate, to absolve, to consecrate, to hear confessions, to celebrate and solemnise the other Sacraments.

Henry claimed *external* jurisdiction as belonging to his kingship. It is the Royal Supremacy—a Supremacy of Rule. He never claimed the *inner* jurisdiction and power of order, which were and are the prerogative of the bishops and clergy. Henry was as much a Romanist in belief as the Pope himself. But the people of England, when Henry was gone, not only accepted his view of the Supremacy, but also went forward in religious teaching. The administration of the Cup to the laity—to take one example out of many—was enacted by the Christian laity in Parliament and was also approved in Convocation while the Bill was being passed. The hierarchy generally went with the people, as in this instance. But they have not always done so. Still less have they always initiated. Sometimes they have been against the religious conviction of the people and have gone to the wall, as in the case of the whole bench of bishops when Elizabeth came to the throne. And, again, when James II had to go, the Primate and some of the bishops would not agree and became non-jurors. Although politics were involved, there is no doubt at all that the predominant feeling of the people, which was fatal to James II, was a religious feeling which would not tolerate in high places what was regarded as Romish superstition and insisted on its being removed, although the sacred rights of the King and the convictions of the non-jurors had to be sacrificed.

It would be easy to multiply instances and make many quotations, but it seems unnecessary. The point is that the Christian conscience of the English people has always asserted itself (by Act of Parlia-

ment when a law was required) as something outside, and not always in harmony with, the views of the hierarchy; although, for the purposes named above, the powers of the hierarchy have been and remain unchallenged.

But it takes all sorts to make a world. Many very excellent people, and some to whose every word we give a ready deference, insist that the Church of England must settle its own teaching in all circumstances or be untrue to the Headship of Jesus Christ. Archbishop Davidson, with the concurrence of all the bishops, solemnly declared in February, 1928, that the Church, "in the last resort" must formulate "its faith in its form of worship." It is pointed out that even the lay members of the Church Assembly are debarred from assisting in the issuing of any statement purporting to define the doctrine of the Church of England on any question of theology, and, although the revised Prayer Book was supposed not to come within this prohibition, it would be extraordinary if, while the Assembly is under this disability, Parliament were to be treated as an appropriate body to pass a Prayer Book which provides for permanent reservation of the consecrated elements under circumstances which admit of adoration. It perhaps adds force to this argument, because it shows that reservation leading to adoration is widely believed to be sanctioned by the new Prayer Book, that a considerable number of clergymen have announced their intention to reserve, or to continue to reserve, for purposes of adoration.

If in great matters such as the Divinity of our Lord, His corporal presence in the Eucharist, the

authority of Holy Scripture, and the duty of submission to the Pope, we were really bound to accept what the clerical Convocations, or even the Church Assembly, thought right, it would be difficult to dispute this view. But the fact that the convictions of the English people, as distinct from the decisions of the hierarchy, have always counted for a great deal in our Christianity, must receive its due weight. Parliament can hardly be blamed if it declines to surrender to the hierarchy, or even to the Assembly, the right it has always possessed to speak in the name of the nation. In England, unlike many other nations, the nation, through Parliament (which, be it remembered, is still a Christian body), must not be superseded by the hierarchy any more than the nation can supersede the hierarchy. In action, and especially when action means change, they must both be agreed or the *status quo ante* must continue. This may be due to the insular independence, the special strength and the liberty-loving qualities of the English people, but at any rate it has always been so in great matters. There are many details which have been properly left to be settled by canons (*i.e.*, by-laws) of the clerical Convocations.

In connection with this point it is said that, whatever may have been the case in days gone by, now the laity are fully represented in the Church Assembly, and that therefore the representative character of Parliament, growing less and less connected with the Church of England, can fairly be disregarded. I devoutly wish the lay representation of the laity in the Assembly were adequate. But what are the facts ? The basis of representation

is the Annual Parish Meeting. I do not stop to ask how many who are on the roll of a parish attend the Annual Meeting. But the total number of people on the rolls in 1928 was just above $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions. The population of England in 1921 was 35 millions! It is almost needless to add anything. Much as we may regret it, the House of Laity does not adequately represent the whole body of lay Churchmen. Still less does it adequately represent Christian England. The bulk of the English people, though perhaps needlessly restive as to questions which, nevertheless, they regard as "clerical" (*e.g.*, as to posture or dress) are individually intensely anxious as to the proper relation between God and their own soul, and is not that religion?

It is further argued that although any variation from the Prayer Book of 1662 is illegal if a prosecution be allowed and pressed, the bishops possess a veto over all prosecutions. They are therefore neither breaking nor "flouting" any law if they allow variations in accordance with the Book of 1928, not as legally permissible, but as variations which, as bishops, they may allow until a prosecution is launched, and then may consider whether they ought to exercise their veto and stop the prosecution.

Archbishop Davidson, in moving the second reading of the Enabling Bill, dealt with this point by giving his answer to the question which he thus formulated: "Why don't you do these things without caring about the exact law?" The Archbishop continued: "That is a most dangerous piece of counsel. . . . It is bad in itself. It recoils upon

those who have to exercise discipline in other ways, if the retort can be made to them—Are you obeying the law when you ask me to obey it ? " Except in this indignant repudiation I do not find from the beginning to the end of the rather lengthy debates on this Bill that Archbishop Davidson ever suggested—and he was too fair a man to let such a point go without mention, if in his view it existed—that it would be possible for the Church, having failed to secure the approval of both Houses, to allow what the Houses had disallowed, by informal action.

As to the illegality of adopting the Prayer Book of 1928, it is enough to explain that our Prayer Books, in most of these legal revisions, have been accompanied by Acts of Uniformity, which have not been repealed, but, as it were, made to apply to each successive revised Prayer Book. The cumulative effect of these Acts is that every clergyman is legally bound to use the Prayer Book of 1662.

How happy the clergy of the seventeenth century, who unwillingly disobeyed the law and took the consequences, would have been if, having conceived, they could have persuaded the authorities to accept, the position that a spiritual repudiation of the existing Prayer Book was not inconsistent with its legal enforcement. Nevertheless there are many people of acute intelligence and great knowledge who find this view of the bishop's licence without law comforting and even convincing.

There are others, equally acute and learned, who agree that, as things stand, the Church of England is bound to Parliament, but argue that that position

is now intolerable, and that relief is not to be sought by tortuous arguments which do not satisfy the man in the street; and, further, that the only remedy is disestablishment, even if it entails a large measure of disendowment and the downfall of the parochial and cathedral system, and reduces the Church of England to a missionary sect.

The view which, because I believe in it, occupies the greater part of this article, is that there are great matters, which, when change is proposed by the Assembly, the Christian opinion of England must settle for itself and may refuse a change, whether the hierarchy goes with it or not. It is suggested that matters of magnitude—at any rate, one such point—were involved in the Prayer Book controversy. It follows, therefore, that, according to the view I have stated, the House of Commons was not only legally but also morally entitled to take the line which they elected to take. This right, easy to trace through English history, still belongs to Christian people in England, and the fact goes to the very bottom of the difference between Rome and England.

VIII. THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND LEGISLATION

SYNOPSIS

LEGISLATIVE work the paramount work of the Church Assembly although it has other functions as well—The Assembly is not an independent legislating body: the ultimate authority rests with Parliament—Importance therefore of giving full consideration to every Measure—This is secured by the Constitution and by the Rules of Procedure—The course of an ordinary Measure described—Special provision made with regard to "liturgical" Measures—Legislative results in ten years—Importance of preparatory and intermediate work done by Committees—Brief survey of the principal subjects dealt with—The attention attracted towards the Pensions and Dilapidations Measures—Constitutional Measures—Ecclesiastical Commissioners' Measures—The problem of over-large dioceses—Union of Benefices—Patronage—Miscellaneous Measures—The Cathedrals Measure likely to reach its final form in the Autumn of 1930—Abnormal activity due to long-delayed reform might now be expected to cease, but probably it will be long before the Assembly suffers from any lack of legislative work.

VIII

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND LEGISLATION

By Sir Philip Baker-Wilbraham

I. LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND PROCEDURE

LEGISLATION—or rather legislative work—is undoubtedly the most important of the Church Assembly's activities. The Assembly has other functions which have nothing to do with legislation, and the importance of these will probably tend to increase as time goes on. It exercises control, in a greater or less degree, over various central administrative bodies of the Church. Through the Central Board of Finance it is responsible for the collection and administration of large sums of money. It can "formulate its judgment by resolution upon any matter concerning the Church of England, or otherwise of religious or public interest." But legislative work is, and perhaps always will be, its first and paramount concern.

But when we speak, as we sometimes do, of Church Assembly legislation, it must be borne in mind that the Assembly is not itself an independent legislating body. It has, indeed, large *powers in regard to legislation*, which were delegated to it by Parliament under the "Enabling Act" (Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act, 1919). But the ultimate legislative authority rests with Parliament; and no Measure passed by the Church Assembly has any legal effect unless it has

received the Royal Assent after a resolution passed by each of the two Houses of Parliament. The result of the Enabling Act was to entrust to the Church Assembly the business of preparing and shaping ecclesiastical Measures, and of presenting them in proper form to Parliament ; but the final decision, Aye or No, is always reserved to Parliament. In effect, Parliament can accept or reject, but cannot amend, a Measure passed by the Church Assembly.

This being so, it is obvious that every Measure passed by the Church Assembly should not only be fully considered in substance, but also carefully prepared in point of form, before it is laid before Parliament. And it may fairly be claimed that every effort is made to secure these ends, so far as it is possible to secure them by rules of procedure.

In the first place, by the constitution of the Assembly itself, nothing (except what relates only to the conduct of business) is deemed to be finally passed by the Assembly which has not received the assent of a majority of the members present and voting of each of the three Houses (Bishops, Clergy and Laity) sitting together or separately. This in itself imposes a fairly heavy burden on those who make a proposal ; the negative, under this rule, has always an advantage over the affirmative.

Secondly—owing mainly to the constant care of Lord Hugh Cecil—the Assembly has from its earliest days possessed an elaborate code of Standing Orders, framed and revised with the object of securing the utmost liberty of discussion. Under

these Orders a Measure must go through *at least* four stages before it is finally passed by the Assembly—Introduction, General Approval, Revision, and Final Approval. If the Measure is at all difficult or controversial, it will probably have to pass through many more.

It may be of interest, perhaps, to describe the course of an ordinary Measure, from its conception in the brain of some member of the Assembly to its ultimate appearance at the end of the annual volume called "Public General Statutes."

1. INTRODUCTION. No individual member of the Assembly, however eminent, is entitled of his own motion to introduce a Measure into the Assembly. This can only be done (*a*) by order of one of the three Houses, or (*b*) more commonly, upon the recommendation of a Committee of the Assembly. Therefore, if a member desires to promote legislation on any subject, his first step normally is to move for a Committee to consider that subject, and to prepare a Measure, if thought fit. The Committee prepares the Measure, with the aid of an expert draftsman, and "sends" it to the Secretary of the Assembly, who records the fact that the Measure has been introduced. Copies are then printed and circulated to members of the Assembly at least a fortnight before the day when it is first due to be considered.

2. GENERAL APPROVAL. The Members in charge of the Measure move that the Measure be generally approved. This stage is equivalent to a second reading in Parliament, and commits the Assembly to nothing except what its name implies —approval of the general principles of the Measure.

3. Revision, Committee and Drafting Stages. If the Measure is generally approved, it must at some time or other pass through at least one stage of revision in the Assembly, when the clauses are considered in detail, and every Member has an opportunity to move amendments. In quite simple cases, revision in the Assembly may follow almost immediately after general approval. But any complicated or controversial Measure is first referred to a Committee specially appointed for its consideration, who go through the Measure carefully, consider all amendments suggested to them, and ultimately report the Measure to the Assembly either with or without amendments; and the Measure as so reported is then revised by the Assembly. This reference to a Committee not only saves the time of the Assembly as a whole, but gives opportunity for more detailed and informal consideration than would be possible in the crowded hours when the Assembly as a whole is in Session.

After revision, the Measure may be ripe for final approval; or it may again be referred to an appointed Committee and again revised by the Assembly. In fact, the processes of revision and reference to an appointed Committee may be repeated indefinitely, as long as the Assembly chooses to order them. This limitless freedom of debate has its disadvantages; the same point may be, and sometimes is, argued again and again. But it is surely preferable to any appearance of stifling discussion. In matters of ecclesiastical politics, perhaps above all others, a settlement by general consent—or at least acqui-

escence—is an object worth achieving, even at some sacrifice.

Lastly, it is sometimes desirable that a Measure which has been agreed in substance should be referred to a Special Committee for consideration in respect of its drafting. The amendments made by a Drafting Committee are confined to matters of form.

4. Final Approval. Assuming that the Measure has safely come through the stages of general approval and revision, and as many other stages as the Assembly has chosen to order, the Members in charge will move That the Measure be Finally Approved. And if this motion be carried, the Measure is automatically referred to the Legislative Committee of the Assembly. The Assembly has now done with the Measure ; and the remaining steps in the procedure are governed by the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act, 1919, commonly known as the " Enabling Act."

5. Ecclesiastical Committee. First, the Legislative Committee submits the Measure to the " Ecclesiastical Committee " constituted by the Enabling Act, consisting of 15 members of the House of Lords and 15 members of the House of Commons. Together with the Measure the Legislative Committee sends to the Ecclesiastical Committee such comments and explanations as it may deem expedient. If necessary, a conference may be held between the two Committees to discuss the provisions of the Measure.

After considering the Measure, the Ecclesiastical Committee drafts a report thereon to Parliament " stating the nature and legal effect of the Measure

and its views as to the expediency thereof, especially with relation to the constitutional rights of His Majesty's subjects." This report is communicated to the Legislative Committee in draft, and is not to be presented to Parliament without the consent of the Legislative Committee. If, as commonly happens, the draft report is on the whole favourable, this consent is given, and the Measure, together with the report of the Ecclesiastical Committee thereon, is forthwith laid before both Houses of Parliament.

At any time before this is done the Legislative Committee may withdraw a Measure from further consideration by the Ecclesiastical Committee; but the Legislative Committee has no power to vary the terms of a Measure.

6. PARLIAMENT. As soon as may be after the Measure and the report of the Ecclesiastical Committee thereon have been laid before Parliament, a resolution is proposed in each of the two Houses directing that such Measure shall be presented to His Majesty for the Royal Assent. If that resolution is passed by each of the two Houses, the Royal Assent is signified to the Measure, which thereupon has the force and effect of an Act of Parliament. If the resolution is defeated in either of the two Houses, the Measure falls to the ground.

"LITURGICAL" MEASURES.

Special provision is made by the constitution of the Church Assembly for Measures "touching doctrinal formulæ or the services or ceremonies of the Church of England, or the administration of the

Sacraments or sacred rites thereof." Any such Measure must be " debated and voted upon by each of the three Houses sitting separately," and then " either accepted or rejected by the Assembly in the terms in which it is finally proposed by the House of Bishops." Elaborate provision has been made by the Standing Orders for the conduct of such Measures in the three Houses of the Assembly; and in addition, the consent of the Convocations of Canterbury and York is made necessary before such a Measure is laid before the Assembly for final approval. After final approval the Measure is dealt with by Parliament in the same way as an ordinary Measure.

So far the only Measures which have gone through this procedure are the Revised Tables of Lessons Measure, which became law in 1922, and the rejected Prayer Book Measures of 1927 and 1928.

II. LEGISLATIVE RESULTS—JULY 1930.

The Assembly has been at work since the summer of 1920, and it normally holds three sessions a year (in February, June or July, and November) lasting for less than five days each. Probably on an average about three days in each session are devoted to legislative business. During the last ten years some forty Measures of greater or less importance have been placed on the statute book; a few others have been rejected or withdrawn; while others again have been considered at length, but are not yet finally completed. This result, of course, could not have been attained without a large amount of preparatory and intermediate work done by Committees.

A complete chronological summary of Measures actually passed is printed in the Official Year Book. Here it will be enough to give a brief survey of the principal subjects dealt with.

Apart from the rejected Prayer Book Measures, probably no legislation as yet considered by the Church Assembly has attracted more general attention—and, one may add, criticism—than the two great Measures dealing with Dilapidations and Pensions for the Clergy.

The Ecclesiastical Dilapidations Measure 1923 set up a new method of meeting the cost of dilapidations on parsonage houses by means of annual assessments. The *Clergy Pensions Measure* 1926 established a contributory system of pensions for all clergy under the age of 55 years on 1st January, 1927. Each of these Measures has since been altered in points of detail by Amending Measures. Each of them will probably be regarded in the future as a beneficial measure of reform, but it is unfortunate that the opportunity for reform, involving increased immediate expenditure on the part of the clergy, should have come at a time of exceptional financial strain and difficulty.

The Clergy Pensions Measures have recently been supplemented by the *Clergy Pensions* (*Older Incumbents*) *Measure*, 1930, which has established a uniform (non-contributory) system of pensions for the older beneficed clergy who are outside the scope of the former Measures.

The question of tithe is often referred to in conjunction with those of dilapidations and pensions, since it also affects the financial position of the clergy. But the present position as regards

tithe is the result of an Act of Parliament (the Tithe Act, 1925) and not of any Measure of the Church Assembly. The Assembly has done what it could by the *Tithe* (*Administration of Trusts*) *Measure*, 1928, to make the position of tithe-owning clergy easier, by providing for the payment of tithe by equal quarterly instalments.

Another group of Measures—first, perhaps, in logical order—may be described as "constitutional"—necessary for setting the Assembly's own house in order. Such were the *Convocations of the Clergy Measure*, 1920, which made it clear that each of the Convocations of Canterbury and York has power to amend the constitution of its Lower House; the familiar *Parochial Church Councils* (*Powers*) *Measure*, 1921; the *Diocesan Boards of Finance Measure*, 1925; the *Representation of the Laity Measure*, 1929, which revised the Rules for the Representation of the Laity; and one or two others of minor importance. The constitution of Diocesan Conferences depends, not upon a Measure, but a Regulation of the Church Assembly—the *Diocesan Conferences Regulation*, 1922. A "Regulation" in the Church Assembly goes through exactly the same processes as a Measure, except that it is not referred to the Legislative Committee or submitted to Parliament; consequently, of course, it has no statutory authority.

Then there is a series of *Ecclesiastical Commissioners Measures*, enabling the Commissioners to make grants out of their Common Fund for various objects which were not before open to them; such as pensions for unbeneficed clergy (1921), augmentation or endowment of archdeaconries, endowment

of new bishoprics, payment of a bishop's costs in legal proceedings, upkeep of certain episcopal houses (1926), additional stipends for elderly unbeneficed clergymen (1928), stipends of clergy in the Isle of Man, and pensions for retiring Church Estates Commissioners (1930). Further, under the *Episcopal Pensions Measure*, 1926, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners finance a partly contributory pensions scheme for bishops, superseding the old scheme under which a retiring bishop might take away one-third of the income of his bishopric, or £2,000 per annum out of that income, whichever was the greater.

The problem of over-large dioceses was dealt with in 1923 and 1925 by Measures dividing the former dioceses of *Winchester*, *Southwell*, *Peterborough* and *Manchester*, and creating the new dioceses of *Guildford* and *Portsmouth*, *Derby*, *Leicester* and *Blackburn*. A Measure proposing to divide the dioceses of *Lichfield* and *Hereford* by creating a new diocese of *Shrewsbury* was defeated in the House of Lords by a majority of one vote only.

By the *Union of Benefices Measure*, 1923, new and permanent machinery was established for uniting small benefices ; and this machinery has now been supplemented by the *Pluralities Measure*, 1930, which enables a temporary plurality to be created in all cases where a permanent union might have been effected.

The subject of Ecclesiastical patronage has been very much discussed in the Assembly, but while there has always been general agreement that some reform is necessary, it has until lately proved very

difficult to produce any measure of reform that met with general approval. So far, the only Measure which has received the Royal Assent is the *Benefices Act*, 1898 (*Amendment*) *Measure*, 1923, which made the right of patronage of a benefice incapable of sale after two vacancies subsequent to the date of the passing of the Measure. A proposal to accelerate the operation of this Measure, by making all rights of patronage of benefices incapable of sale immediately, was defeated by a narrow margin at the Summer Session of 1930. At the same Session, however, three other Measures dealing with patronage passed through their final stages without any serious controversy, and are now awaiting the consideration of the Ecclesiastical Committee. These are the *Benefices* (*Diocesan Boards of Patronage*) *Measure* [*C.A.* 318*B*], the *Benefices* (*Exercise of Rights of Presentation*) *Measure* [*C.A.* 319*B*], and the *Benefices* (*Transfer of Rights of Patronage*) *Measure* [*C.A.* 305*E*].*

This is not the place to attempt any detailed description of these Measures, which still await consideration by the Ecclesiastical Committee and Parliament; but the first two of them have been before the Assembly for a long time, and were in their earlier forms distinctly controversial. It is satisfactory to note that by dint of long and patient revision it has been possible to arrive at so large a measure of agreement upon a difficult subject.

Other Measures have been passed which are more difficult to classify. The *Revised Table of Lessons Measure*, 1922, authorised the use of what is

*Since this paragraph was written the Benefices (Transfer of Rights of Patronage) Measure has received the Royal Assent.

generally known as the new Lectionary. The *Benefices* (*Ecclesiastical Duties*) *Measure*, 1926, is an attempt to make better provision for those very difficult cases where the ecclesiastical duties of a benefice are, for one reason or another, inadequately performed. The *Indian Church Measure*, 1927 (which should be read in conjunction with the Indian Church Act, 1927), provided for the dissolution of the legal union between the Church of England and the Church of England in India, and for the constitution of the latter Church as a voluntary association managing its own affairs. The *Parochial Registers and Records Measure*, 1929, provides for the better care in certain cases of Parochial Registers and other records in ecclesiastical custody. The *Parsonages Measure*, 1930, consolidates and amends the law relating to the sale, improvement and purchase of parsonage houses. The *Marriage Measure*, 1930, enables marriages to be solemnised in any Church which is the usual place of worship of the persons to be married or either of them, even though it is not the church of the parish of residence of either of the parties. And there are various other Measures of minor or local importance which need not here be mentioned. Enough has been said to show that the legislative activities of the Assembly have already covered a wide and varied field.

As to the future, it would be rash to prophesy. At the present moment the only large Measure of general interest and importance actually before the Assembly is the Cathedrals Measure [C.A. 264B] ; and there seem to be good grounds for hoping that this may reach its final form in the Autumn Session

of 1930. It would indeed be natural that after the abnormal activity of the first ten years, when proposals for reform of all kinds—most of them long delayed—followed one another thick and fast, we should settle down to a quieter flow of business; but expectations of this kind are apt to be elusive, and probably it will be long before the Assembly suffers from any lack of legislative work.

IX. THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE RELATIONS OF CHURCH AND STATE

SYNOPSIS

THE corporate life of the Church in its relation to the State—The impact of the Reformation on the relation between the King, the National Church and the Pope—Ecclesiastical supremacy of Henry VIII and Elizabeth—Hooker's theory of Church and State—The identity of Church and State no longer maintained at the Restoration—Relation of Church and State changed by schism of non-jurors—Convocation silenced—The teaching of the Tractarians restored the sense of the distinction between Church and State—Convocation meets again—A House of Laymen created in each Province—The Representative Church Council—With the creation of the Church Assembly the theory of the identity of Church and State was laid aside—Parliament remained the organ of legislation for the Church—This arrangement does not even purport to distinguish thoroughly between the spiritual and temporal spheres—The Prayer Book of 1927—Its permissive character—Its purport to cope with the inundation of variety not by dams but by channels—Successive rejection of 1927 and 1928 Prayer Books showed the defect of the 1919 arrangement—The only terms on which Assembly and Parliament could work smoothly—The Bishops took the only course open to them—No defiance of Parliament in this—The disagreement between Assembly and Parliament must greatly modify relations between Church and State—The present freedom of the Church—Compared to Church of Ireland—The discredit of the Ecclesiastical Courts—The rejection of the Prayer Book Measure has deprived the Church of that use of the State's authority which pertains to establishment—The effort to escape from the present position—The prospect that autonomy may be refused—If the relations of Assembly and Parliament are to change the Church must be recognised by Cæsar as having authority over the things of God.

IX

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE RELATIONS OF CHURCH AND STATE

By Lord Hugh Cecil, M.P.

AN important effect—perhaps the most important effect—of setting up the Church Assembly has been to increase the corporate self-consciousness of the Church of England. The belief that the Catholic Church is a body dates back to the New Testament. And the Church of England has always claimed to be a part of the Catholic Church and to share in its corporate life. But the various changes of circumstance and movements of opinion since the days of the Apostles have presented the corporate life of the Church in different aspects, and notably in its relation to the State. For, first, the Church was an illegal religion, persecuted by the State; then, after the conversion of Constantine, it entered on a long period when it was honoured as a divine body, when it lent its approbation and sanctification to the State and when the State, unhappily, lent its coercive power to the Church. The growing importance of the See of Rome, the erection, storey after storey, of its impressive grandeur, modified in many ways the relations of Church and State; so, too, did the prevalence of feudalism, the development of nationalities and the statecraft of many great sovereigns and prelates. Yet through all modifications Church and

State remained theoretically distinct, yet closely allied.

When the Reformation came it found in England the King, the National Church and the Pope all claiming authority, and its impact produced a new relation between them. The Pope was cast out, and the King assumed by an innovation (the novelty of which, however, he denied) not only the supremacy over all his subjects, which all kings had possessed, but also the supreme headship of the Church, which till Henry VIII had belonged to the Pope. This ecclesiastical supremacy Elizabeth revived in a more modest form. It was the personal supremacy of the sovereign, not the supremacy of the State; and it was only the supremacy of Parliament in so far as Parliament was the obedient organ of the sovereign. One thing alone in the history of the Church of England under Elizabeth is really due to the independent initiative of Parliament, and that is the Act requiring the subscription of the Thirty-nine Articles by the clergy. The Act of Uniformity was passed at the bidding of the Queen; and the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth was full of occasions when the Queen rebuked the House of Commons for seeking to meddle in Church matters, and insisted that these belonged to her own ecclesiastical prerogative and were not to be interfered with by Parliament.

Towards the close of Elizabeth's reign a theory of the relations of Church and State had grown up, borrowed largely from mediæval precedents but differing from any mediæval teaching by the elimination of the Pope. This theory is best known to us as formulated by Hooker. It consists in

affirming that Church and State are different aspects of the same body; and that the sovereign is supreme over both Church and State. Church and State alike culminate in the supreme ruler, who reigns over both according to the lawful constitution of each. The constitution of the Church—that is, of the community thought of as the Church—reserved to spiritual persons the ministry of the word and the sacraments, with which the supremacy of the sovereign did not interfere. But this independence of the things of God from all secular government was thought not inconsistent with the complete subjection of all persons and causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, to the government of the Crown.

There are people who still cling, as shipwrecked mariners do to floating spars, to the remains of this shattered theory. But even from the first it broke hopelessly down; and the movement of modern opinion has made it more and more incredible. The logical consequences of the theory brought it to rapid destruction. For it involved coercing the subjects of the Crown who would not conform to the ecclesiastical laws; and it shocked the conscience of the school of Geneva by using the Crown's power to govern religion. This led to the conflict between the Puritans on the one side and the King and Bishops on the other. Laud and Charles I perished on the scaffold, martyrs for their religious principles, but also victims of the stupendous falsity of Hooker's theory of Church and State. When at the Restoration King and Bishops came back, the identity of Church and State could no longer be fully maintained. Yet the Church still

invited Parliament to confirm the Liturgy and enforce its use; and Parliament, eagerly supporting the Church, punished nonconformity by a series of persecuting statutes. The distinction between the authority of Convocation and that of Parliament, on which Elizabeth had been accustomed to insist, was now fully recognised, though Charles II's position was less dominating in both Church and State than that of Elizabeth. A most important modification introduced by the Long Parliament was maintained at the Restoration—that the King was not allowed to delegate his supreme ecclesiastical authority, which virtually made it inoperative in its visitatorial function. James II's reign, with his blundering attempt to imitate the great Tudor sovereigns and carry out a religious revolution by the authority of the Crown, struck another blow at the personal supremacy of the King over the Church; and when William came in, the theory of the identity of Church and State was undermined by the passing of the Toleration Act. There followed the schism of the non-jurors, and the alienation both among non-jurors and jurors of much that was most vigorous in the Church from whole-hearted allegiance to the King. The Crown, suspecting the Church of Jacobitism;—many of the clergy feeling humiliated by having taken insincere oaths;—others (and those sometimes men of great ability) driven by the oaths out of the ministry;—changed the relation of Church and State from one of uneasy partnership to one more like that of keeper and prisoner or master and slave. But now it was the State, rather than the King personally, which was keeper and

master. Convocation was silenced, and Parliament became the only legislature of the Church ; the power of appointing Bishops was used to safeguard the throne of the House of Hanover, and a combination of Erastian statesmanship with the tranquil worldliness of the eighteenth century calmed and corrupted the zeal of the Church. The Methodist and Evangelical movements revived the spiritual life of the people ; but it was left to the Tractarians to bring forward once again the claim of the English Church to belong to the whole Catholic body and to minister by divine commission the grace of the word and the sacraments. This teaching restored more and more among Churchmen the sense of the distinction between Church and State and the claim of the Church to independence in spiritual things. Convocation was again allowed to meet for business ; and after a generation a House of Laymen was created in each Province to take counsel with the clergy in matters not trenching upon the teaching office of the Church. Then, under the leadership of Bishop Wordsworth, of Salisbury, the Convocations and the Houses of Laymen held joint sittings in what was called the Representative Church Council ; and in another fifteen years the Representative Church Council revised its own Constitution and made it available as the Constitution of a National Assembly of the Church of England.

A practical regard for the efficiency of the Church was a main cause of the setting up of the Church Assembly. The incompetence of Parliament to pass necessary Church legislation had been abundantly proved by experience. But there was also

expressed in the Church Assembly the recovered conviction that the Church was distinct from the State, and partook of the divine life of the whole Catholic Church of Christ. Like all institutions, the Church Assembly strengthened and intensified the opinions which created it. It was the organ of the Church, set up altogether by the Church to express the Church's will especially in legislation. It did not claim in any degree the authority of the State. To be sure, Parliament gave it, by what we call the Enabling Act, highly important facilities for carrying legislation. But the Enabling Act, important as were its effects, operated only by changing the machinery of Parliament. The Act did nothing to the Church Assembly except to recognise it as referred to in an Address to the Crown presented by the two Convocations. The Act then went on to direct that, subject to certain safeguards, a Measure relating to the affairs of the Church, and prepared by the Church Assembly, should receive the Royal assent as an Act of Parliament without passing through the various stages which are necessary for the enactment of a Bill, in virtue of a simple resolution adopted by both Houses. This simplification of procedure arose naturally from the purpose which lay behind the constitution of the Church Assembly. It made legislation easy by freeing it from the encumbrance of normal parliamentary stages; and it limited Parliament to veto or assent, thus securing to the Church Assembly the power to determine the form of all Church legislation. This recognised the Church as a distinct body with its own organ, the Assembly, able at least to frame and submit to

Parliament its own laws. The theory of the identity of Church and State, of there being two aspects of the same community, was laid aside. It had always been unreal; and the growth of religious liberty and the recognition of the right to dissent from the established Church without incurring punishment or even disability, had changed it from a basis of Church privilege to one of Church servitude by a movement of opinion which made both privilege and servitude indefensible. The establishment of the Church was indeed maintained, and no part of the establishment, except the function of Parliament as a Church legislature, was even affected. Nevertheless, the formal acceptance of the distinctness of Church and State accomplished the rejection of the old theory, which had been in its long history more and more discredited. When the Church set up its Assembly, and Parliament recognised the new institution, Hooker, who had long been dead, was wisely buried.

But, as happens in England, the new institution and the relation between Church and State which it formally expressed, was intellectually incomplete. Parliament remained the organ of legislation for the Church. Church Measures, though framed by the Church and its Assembly, derive their whole legal authority from the Royal assent given in response to the resolutions of the two Houses. The form is the Church's, but the legal significance is the State's. A Church Measure, like an ordinary Bill, becomes operative by the authority of the King in Parliament, and a Measure may relate to anything which (in wide language) concerns the affairs

of the Church. Obviously this arrangement does not even purport to distinguish thoroughly and precisely between the spiritual and temporal spheres, between the things that belong to Cæsar and the things that belong to God. That delimitation of the boundary between spiritual and secular, in respect to legislation, was left to be drawn by the working of the new machinery under the influence of what optimists call English good sense, and pessimists the English love of muddling through. As long as the Assembly and Parliament should take the same view about legislation, and as long as Parliament was in the mood to recognise the independence of the Church in spiritual matters, no grave difficulty was likely to arise. A great deal of legislation was needed which applied to the temporal affairs of the Church, only indirectly affecting its spiritual life, and not trenching at all upon the ministry of the word and the sacraments. About all this legislation, even if disagreement happened, it would raise no grave question of principle, and might be patiently borne or adjusted by modification of detail.

And, in fact, the new machinery worked smoothly enough for several years. A number of Measures passed into law which embodied the solution approved by the Assembly of many administrative problems. But in 1927 a disagreement arose between the Assembly and Parliament which was both important in itself and likely to prove far-reaching in its consequences. The Church had been deliberating in Convocation and in the Assembly for almost twenty years about the task of revising the Book of Common Prayer. The fruit

of this long preparation, first in Convocation and afterwards, according to the Constitution of the Assembly, took shape in the Prayer Book Measure of 1927. This Measure was the work of the Bishops, but it was carried by all three Houses of the Assembly, and unquestionably commanded the consent of a majority both of the clergy and of those laity who actively concern themselves in the work of the Church. The Measure had a peculiar character, perfectly well known, but often forgotten in controversy. It imposed compulsorily few changes in the law, and those little noticed or criticised. Its main purpose—and that which excited interest and opposition—was strictly permissive. It referred to a Book, formally deposited with the officials of Parliament, which was (with slight exceptions) a collection of permissive variations from the text and rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, and additions, equally permissive, to that Book. This permissive character made the Prayer Book Measure an entirely different sort of legislation from the Acts of Uniformity of Edward VI, Elizabeth and Charles II. Those Acts aimed at uniformity ; the Prayer Book Measure aimed at diversity, but a diversity within certain limits. Naturally, it was about these limits that controversy arose. Very many diversities of liturgical practice already in fact existed. Some of these were important and controversial ; some were important without being controversial ; some were controversial without being important, and some were neither controversial nor important. Variation from the strict rules of the Prayer Book was so widespread as to be almost universal. In face of

this prevalence of variety, uniformity was abandoned. The purport of the Prayer Book Measure was to restrain variation, not by an absolute resistance and enforcement of uniformity, but by a reasonable degree of control over the almost anarchic diversity of practice which had arisen. The Bishops' plan was to cope with the inundation of variety not by dams but by channels, thus canalising in orderly streams the confusion of the waters.

The plan was accepted by the Church, and still prospered even over the threshold of Parliament. The Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament, which had been constituted under the Enabling Act to advise Parliament about Church Measures, carefully considered the Prayer Book Measure with the assistance of a strong sub-committee, who scrutinised the Deposited Book in detail. After full deliberation the Committee recommended Parliament to approve the Measure. They came to this conclusion because they conceived that it was their duty and the duty of Parliament only to consider the interests of the State and the constitutional rights of the King's subjects, and not to determine any strictly religious question. From this point of view, noting that such statutes as the Act of Settlement and the Bill of Rights were not affected, they were not deterred from approving the Measure because it was opposed on strictly religious grounds by Evangelicals and some extreme Anglo-Catholics. The House of Lords agreed with the Committee in approving the Measure; but in the course of its debate many Lords entered fully into the religious controversies which had arisen about the Deposited Book. And in the

House of Commons, after a debate which turned entirely on the doctrine, ritual and liturgical practice of the Church of England, partly as affected by the Deposited Book, partly as exhibited in what was being done by many of the clergy throughout the country, the House rejected the Prayer Book Measure. To escape from the impending deadlock between the Assembly and Parliament the Bishops tried the experiment of a second attempt; but the attempt failed. The second Measure was rejected in the House of Commons by a slightly larger majority.

This result showed clearly the defect of the arrangement of 1919. The Assembly representing the Church and the Parliament representing the State were left face to face in a narrow pass where there was no turning. The Assembly had the right to frame Measures for the Church, and, above all, a Measure concerned with the worship of the Church must be shaped by the Church alone. Yet the Measure changed the law; and the House of Commons had a right to veto any Measure. Without the consent of both Houses the law could not be changed. The right of the Assembly to determine the form of a Measure and the right of Parliament to reject changes in the law were in conflict. The House of Commons had refused to reconsider its veto; the Assembly would certainly refuse to alter the substance of its Measure to please Parliament. There was a deadlock: the machinery of 1919 had broken down. The Assembly and Parliament could only work smoothly together under the Enabling Act if Parliament was content to accept the principle that the Church

through its Assembly must decide spiritual issues and Parliament confine itself to saving the secular rights of the nation. The rash intrusion of the House of Commons into spiritual things had caused the breakdown. The Bishops were placed in a position of great difficulty. The effect of the rejection of the Measure was like the effect of all rejections, to maintain the legal *status quo*. But the legal *status quo* was defined by the Act of Uniformity of 1662, and that Act had long been riddled by multifold non-observance. There were several courses conceivably open to the Bishops in the circumstances, but practically only one. Conceivably the Bishops might have tried to induce the Church Assembly to present another Measure to Parliament framed so as to pass the House of Commons. But apart from the extreme difficulty of making certain of the Measure's passage by conciliating the triumphant Protestant party, and securing in any degree the restoration of discipline in the Church, there was the insuperable objection that the consent neither of the Clergy nor the Laity was likely to be given ; nor would the consciences of the Bishops themselves permit Parliament so to invade the ministry of the word and the sacraments. Or again, the Bishops might simply have done nothing, and left the disorders of public worship and the influences which had caused them, to go on as they had been going on for years before the Measure. This course, though in a sense easy because of its negative character, would have relaxed the remaining fibres of unity within the Church, would have deeply shocked and disappointed religious opinion among all sorts of

Churchmen, and would have greatly strengthened the power of individualist self-will among the clergy. It was utterly impossible, on the other hand, to enforce the old law in face of all the old difficulties, with the tremendous addition that the law had been condemned by the three Houses of the Assembly.

The only thing the Bishops could do is what they did: they could recognise that while the rejection of the Prayer Book Measure destroyed that Measure and prevented recourse to legal authority for the new and larger limits of liturgical rule which the Revised Book expressed, yet they might build upon the unquestionable moral authority of the Revised Book, approved as it had been by Bishops, Clergy and Laity, in the Assembly and by the Convocations. On this basis, using their spiritual power and influence, they might try without any coercion to make the Revised Book the standard and limit of variation in liturgical practice. In the circumstances this was the only course open to the Bishops; but when they adopted it they were at once denounced, and have been repeatedly blamed for defying Parliament and upholding a system of lawless disobedience. Such censure was unreasonable, but it gained plausibility from the peculiar character of the Prayer Book Measure. If it had been a Measure imposing some rule which required obedience and was to be enforced by compulsion, it would have been evidently impossible for the Bishops or anyone else to imitate its operation by mere administration or influence. But, as the critics of the Bishops have not perceived, a permissive system may always

rest upon a voluntary basis ; and accordingly it is at any rate theoretically possible that the plan of the Prayer Book Measure may, except in the few points in which it changed the compulsory law, be carried through by the voluntary consent of all concerned. The Bishops, without the Measure, can still by influence canalise the inundation of variety of practice according to the design of the Revised Prayer Book ; and this is what they resolved to try and do. Forced back by Parliament on the general non-observance of rule from which they had sought to escape, they resolved by their episcopal authority to try to limit the variations from the Prayer Book according to the revised standard, although Parliament refused them the help of the law. There was in this no defiance of Parliament and no greater disregard of law than had existed for many years. The rejection of the Measure had full effect. The Measure was dead ; and the Bishops were left to the old law and the long tradition of law-breaking, to do the best they could with other instruments than law.

Apart, however, from the actual controversy about the Prayer Book Measure, the fact of the disagreement between the Assembly and Parliament must in the end greatly modify the relations between Church and State. Some people—and notably the Bishop of Durham—believe that the Church must accept disestablishment as the only way to uphold its spiritual liberty. But in a sense the Church is freer at the present moment than it would be under disestablishment. To be sure, the freedom is the freedom of laxity, or, if you like, of licence rather than the ordered freedom of

due authority. But it is instructive to contrast the observance of rules of public worship in the Church of England and the parallel observance in the Church of Ireland. In the free Church of Ireland, disestablished fifty years ago, a rigid rule is enforced by an effectual discipline which the law of the State will support. In the established Church of England the Bishops only attempt to enforce a relaxed rule, and in that attempt must depend not on the law but on voluntary obedience. The Church of Ireland could, if it chose, change its rule at pleasure, and if they did so change it, would have that support from the State which the State always gives to the enforcement of contract; whereas the Church of England can make no legal change without the consent of Parliament, and Parliament has refused its consent, leaving to the Church only moral weapons of discipline. It is curious that the difference between the established and the disestablished Church is that the disestablished Church has a larger power to use the coercive hand of the State than the established Church, which is left to spiritual authority or personal influence and is deprived altogether of legal coercion. It is worth observing that in respect to public worship the Church of England is now in the same position as the primitive Church was in times of persecution. For that purpose—of course, for that purpose only—the Church is actually more detached from the law than under disestablishment, and more independent of the State than a disestablished Church could be. A Bishop confronted by a lawless clergyman can do only what a Bishop before the conversion of Con-

stantine could do, when Christianity was an illegal religion and the Church a criminal society.

The rejection of the Prayer Book Measure is not the only cause of this detachment from the State and the law. It is largely due to the discredit in which the Ecclesiastical Courts have for more than forty years been plunged. An elaborate reform of those Courts was, shortly before the rejection of the Prayer Book Measure, prepared by a very able Commission under the Church Assembly; and had the Prayer Book Measure passed, it was intended to proceed with that reform. But the rejection of the reform of the Prayer Book involved also the abandonment of the reform of the Courts. Obviously there was no sense in setting up new Courts to enforce a law of which the Church had solemnly by the mouths of Bishops, Clergy and Laity expressed its disapproval. The upshot is that, so far as public worship is concerned, the Church of England is in the position of a Church which is not only disestablished but outlawed. The metaphor of a "church in chains" is sometimes used to describe the Church of England's condition. But the metaphor is incorrect. It would be better to say that the Church is disarmed; the sword of the law has fallen from its grasp; it has been stripped of that armour of legal authority which ever since the days of Augustine has belonged to it. The effect of the rejection of the Prayer Book Measure has not been to impose the authority of the State upon the Church; it has been to deprive the Church of that use of the State's authority which pertains to establishment, without giving it that support of the law which is freely

given to Churches which never have been, or have ceased to be, established.

It is not surprising that an effort is to be made to escape from the present position. A Commission is to be appointed by the Archbishops, charged with the duty of considering the whole of the relations between Church and State. Plainly we cannot foresee what the result of the labours of that Commission will be ; but certain observations may be made. It is clear that the State will neither attempt nor, if it did, be suffered to achieve the ordering of the Church's worship or doctrine. The Church would not submit to State ordering, and the State has not the slightest inclination to give orders. If Hooker be dead, much more are Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth. Accordingly, since the State cannot settle the order of the Church's worship, it must either be left unsettled or be settled as the Church may choose. The only possible alternatives are the present outlawry and the free autonomy of the Church. The State might give the Church its liberty by disestablishment and lend to the disestablished Church, founding its discipline on the principle of contract, the coercion which the State always gives to the enforcement of a contract. This would be one way of setting up Church autonomy. But, in respect to the Church of England, disestablishment involves a good deal that it did not involve in respect to Ireland or Wales. England is the heart of the Kingdom and, indeed, of the Empire. In London the King is crowned ; in London national thanksgivings and national intercessions are offered ; the religious life of the nation which, in spite of many

irreligious influences, seems still vigorous, must find its scene of expression in the national metropolis. To part from all this would be very distasteful. Disestablishment attracts few friends except those who are zealous, like the Bishop of Durham, for the liberty and discipline of the Church. Moreover, disestablishment in England would almost certainly involve disestablishment in Scotland, where the established Church seems happily to have solved the problem of reconciling autonomy with establishment. But it may be feared that the English people may, at any rate for a long time, prefer the present system of outlawry to either disestablishment or free though established autonomy. Much doubtless depends on the Protestant party. They succeeded in 1927–28 by appealing to the deep anti-clerical feeling which, as Professor Trevelyan truly says, is always to be found in England. But the effect of their success has been different from and almost contrary to what they desired. By hindering the Bishops they have hindered discipline ; they have not promoted Protestantism. It is the same with the Prayer Book as it was forty years ago with the reform of the Courts. Then, as now, the Protestant party stood in the way of High Church reform. Consequently the Courts have remained as they were, paralysed and useless. Now the rejection of the Prayer Book Measure has doubly locked the door against reforming the Courts ; and without either a revised law of public worship or reformed Courts to enforce it, the cause of coercive discipline is hopeless. This is not what Protestants desire. But I am not sanguine enough to expect that the

Protestant party will ever learn by experience ; and it seems not unlikely therefore that autonomy, whether under establishment or by disestablishment, will be refused, and the present negation of coercive discipline will continue. But if the relations of the Assembly and Parliament are to change, they can only change in one way—by allowing the Church the free autonomy in spiritual matters which belongs to its religious character. If anything is done, the incomplete work of the Enabling Act must be completed, and the Church, through the mouths of Bishops, Clergy and Laity in due order, must be recognised by Cæsar as having upon earth authority over the things of God.

X. THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH FINANCE

SYNOPSIS

THE Great War marked the flood-tide of corporate effort in England—Flood-tides are followed by ebb-tides—We forget what team work accomplished—Rising generation and its dislike of authority—The Church has always taught that the management of finance was of the first importance—Principles of finance set out in the various Prayer Books—The Offertory to be treated as a gift to Almighty God—The responsibility of the Church for the maintenance of the ministry—The Rubric on Briefs indicates that even before the 19th century the wider aspects of Church organisation were not forgotten—Changes consequent on increase of population—Queen Anne's Bounty and the Ecclesiastical Commission—Rise of Central Societies—The invention of the internal combustion engine opened a new era—Conditions which led to the reorganisation of finance in the 19th century reproduced in the 20th century—Committee of enquiry established as outcome of Lambeth Conference of 1910—Report issued in 1911 originated the modern system of English ecclesiastical finance—The various stages in the ladder of financial organisation were therefore in existence when the Church Assembly came into being—The appointment of the Property and Revenues Commission—The reconstitution of the Central Board of Finance—The area of Church Assembly effort—The Assembly and the Central Societies—The quota explained—Three principles underlying the system—The quota in relation to capacity to pay—Failures and successes in connection with Training Colleges for Teachers and the supply of candidates for Holy Orders—The uselessness of the unwilling gift—The uplifting influence of the Church Assembly upon the character of Christian finance.

X

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH FINANCE

By Earl Grey

SPIRITUAL energy in all its forms is incomparably the most powerful of all forces, and a special responsibility falls therefore upon those who might be described as the civil servants of the Church, as apart from its ministers. They are grouped into many departments, but this chapter is concerned with only one of them, namely, that which deals with the service of the corporate effort of members of the Church to help their neighbours.

The great war marked the flood tide of corporate effort in England in all directions. Everyone subordinated private preferences to the common will and the result was a record of achievement that still appears incredible. But flood tides in nature are followed by ebb tides, and to-day our chief desire seems to be to forget the war and all its works. We are not altogether successful. We do indeed often succeed in forgetting what team work accomplished ; but we remember much more often that the directors and managers made many mistakes, and the reaction on the rising generation shows itself in a dislike of all authority and a reluctance even to join in corporate effort. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find the proper financial administration of the alms of the Church looked upon as a mundane matter which good Christians

are justified in leaving to others presumably less religiously minded than themselves. So far can thoughtless reaction carry us from first principles; the teaching of the New Testament is very different.

From the beginning of its existence in any sense as an organised body, the Church has taught that management of finance by its members as individuals and by the Church as a body is a matter of the first importance. The history of early times as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles shows the first attempts made to administer corporate funds, to deal with those (like Ananias) who were not honest about their quota, and to control poor relief. Some of these attempts were ill-conceived and therefore failed. Others were more successful and created permanent sections of financial administration which persist to the present time. St. Paul, taking a wide view of the obligations of Churchmanship, was the first to define and apply principles to international Church finance by transferring the contributions of the faithful in Greece for the needs of the home Church in Jerusalem. His teaching about finance is unequalled in inspiration to this day.

It is not necessary to follow the process of organisation through intricacies of papal or mediæval finance or to examine the extremely interesting but rather dubious methods of the monastic establishments either in England or elsewhere. The principles of finance, as they were understood and maintained by the leaders of the Reformed Faith in England, are set out in the various Prayer Books and reach finality in the Book of 1662. In that book the rights of the Church to be supported by its members, and the duties of the members to give

that support, are set out specifically. In the principal service of public worship and fellowship, the Order of Administration of the Lord's Supper, the two last rubrical directions at the end of the Service run as follows :—

> " . . . And yearly at Easter every Parishioner shall reckon with the Parson, Vicar, or Curate, or his or their Deputy or Deputies ; and pay to them or him all Ecclesiastical Duties, accustomably due, then and at that time to be paid."
>
> " After the Divine Service ended, the money given at the Offertory shall be disposed of to such pious and charitable uses, as the Minister and Churchwardens shall think fit. Wherein if they disagree, it shall be disposed of as the Ordinary shall appoint."

Nothing which has been done or ordered in the Church of England since that year has varied the directions so given, and the Deposited Book of 1928 maintains them unchanged. At the Offertory itself, there is a further rubrical direction in the following terms :—

> " Whilst these Sentences are in reading, the Deacons, Churchwardens, or other fit person appointed for that purpose, shall receive the Alms for the Poor, and other devotions of the people, in a decent bason to be provided by the Parish for that purpose ; and reverently bring it to the Priest, who shall humbly present and place it upon the holy Table."

This rubric is followed in the Prayer for the Church Militant by the petition for the acceptance of the said alms.

There are certain points which here immediately appear, upon which it seems necessary to lay emphasis if we are to understand the principles which have guided Church authorities in the management of finance in recent years.

First of all, the money given at the time of the Offertory, having been collected by the Deacons and Churchwardens or others, is to be treated as a gift to Almighty God, for it is to be humbly presented at the holy Table by the priest. And here I might comment upon what I observe to be a growing practice in the administration of Holy Communion, of eliminating this piece of ritual and of carrying away the alms as if they were something of which we are ashamed, and of not presenting them at the holy Table at all. Of course, if the alms at this the greatest of services, are devoted, as I am afraid they sometimes are, merely to the comfort and convenience of the worshippers, defraying only the heating and lighting bills and such things, then there would be a reason for not regarding them as the alms of the faithful under the terms of the rubric; but I think that such application of the alms is very rare. The rubric in the service itself contemplates that the alms shall be for the relief of poor folk, but that there may be other devotions also; these latter, in accordance with the governing rubric, are to be disposed of in accordance with the wishes of the Minister and Churchwardens.

The first of the rubrics relates to the responsibility of the Church for the maintenance of the ministry. Its exact historical bearing is not without doubt, but it seems to refer primarily to the payment of

tithes, moduses or other charges imposed of ancient custom before the memory of man for the maintenance of the parish priest. Since the year 1662 by various stages of legislation these charges have been reduced to a method consonant with our highly organised civilisation. The Queen Anne's Bounty is now authorised by statute to collect these charges and to pay them over to the various curates of parishes and others to whom they are due. But all are not holders of land or occupiers of hereditaments in respect of which tithe is of long custom payable. It was so even in 1662, and other payments for the support of the parish priest were of free will made according to the ability of each man. The direct successor of the practice after many vicissitudes is the Easter Offering, which is now so well established a feature in parochial finance of to-day.

It may be also noted that in the Prayer Book there is a direction in the service for the Churching of Women that the woman who cometh to give her thanks must offer accustomed offerings; while in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick, the minister in visiting the sick man is given the following directions:—

> "... And if he hath not before disposed of his goods, let him then be admonished to make his Will, and to declare his Debts, what he oweth, and what is owing unto him; for the better discharging of his conscience, and the quietness of his Executors. But men should often be put in remembrance to take order for the settling of their temporal estates, whilst they are in health."

These were the general principles, then, that underlay the attitude of the Church of England towards finance in those quieter days which preceded the application of steam to locomotion, both on land and sea. As will be observed, they are for the most part individual and parochial. They apparently look no farther afield than the confines of the parish, though yet another rubric indicates a method by which parishes were bound together in a corporate unity. In the rubric which immediately precedes the Offertory, permission is given, if occasion be, that briefs, citations and excommunications should be read. A brief is a royal Letter Patent for collections for particular purposes. At the time of the compilation of the Prayer Book of 1662 they were frequent and in many parish registers notice is often found of them. For example, a brief was issued after the Fire of London, and later for the redemption of slaves in Algeria, as well as " for the Protestant Churches in Lithuania " and for similar purposes. Thus the wider aspects of Church organisation were not entirely forgotten.

It was, however, the large increase of population at the beginning of the 19th century and the development of locomotion by land and sea that led to great changes. The reforms of the two decades 1830–1850 were applied not merely to civil and political organisation, but also to ecclesiastical and not least to financial. The Queen Anne's Bounty had been established at the beginning of the 18th century for the management of certain funds which had been diverted at the Reformation, and were then restored, but the Ecclesiastical Commission

was the first real attempt to co-ordinate finance, to bring to an end abuses in administration and to apply the Church's resources in a comprehensive way. The monies so to be controlled were mainly those arising from the endowments of sees and cathedrals, accumulated through centuries by divers processes, and by the chance of unruly times ; and parochial endowments in the strict sense were for the most part untouched. Many of the monies, however, which had gradually become attached to cathedrals and sees were in their origin parochial and therein no doubt was found some justification for the direction in the Ecclesiastical Commissions Act that the surplus monies at their disposal should be applied for the better spiritual provision of the parishes. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners were for the whole of the 19th century the chief administrative financial body in the Church of England, but side by side with them there grew up a number of Societies, both central and diocesan, whose task it was to co-ordinate the extra-parochial voluntary gifts of Church people.

One of the earliest of the diocesan societies for the improvement of Church finance was founded by Archdeacon, afterward Cardinal, Manning, whose efforts in Sussex were imitated in many other dioceses ; but it was necessary that the monies of wealthy areas should be transferred for Church purposes to poor areas, following the example of St. Paul mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and accordingly such central societies as the Additional Curates Society, the Church Pastoral Aid Society and others came into being. At the end of the 19th century there were literally hundreds of them,

and a perusal of the Official Year Book of the Church of England will reveal the enormous and wide-reaching network of organisation which has been so created.

The invention of the internal combustion engine has opened a new era in the history of civilisation : the means of transport are being multiplied a hundredfold : transport of all kinds in returning from the railways to the roads, and the air will soon be used almost exactly a hundred years after the coming of the rail-road as an ordinary means of transit. The conditions which led to the reorganisation of finance in the 19th century are thus being almost exactly reproduced in the 20th century and the old bottles can no longer contain the new wine ; the old methods are no longer suitable for the new conditions.

At the very moment when the Church was definitely setting its hand towards the reorganisation of its finance there was bestowed upon it *casu quodam* the power to effect reforms by a new constitutional process which can best be summed up in the phrase " Church Assembly legislation."

During the session of the Lambeth Conference of 1910 some of the bishops from the Dioceses oversea protested against the chaotic nature of the finance of the Church at home, especially so far as it concerned the voluntary offerings of Church people. They found that the haphazard way in which it was managed had far-reaching effects in their own provinces and dioceses oversea, and they besought the Archbishops to establish a committee of inquiry to review the subject and to suggest methods which might in the end bring about a better state

of things. Accordingly the Archbishops reviewed the complaints, and after inquiry of those chiefly concerned, appointed a committee of thirty-five members with the following terms of reference :—

1. To consider the position, administration, and mutual relation of the various funds which are raised for Church purposes by voluntary subscription, whether Diocesan, Provincial, or General, and the most effectual means of using such funds to supplement the endowments of the Church.

2. Further, to consider the best means of raising and administering additional funds to supplement those that are now raised.

3. To present a Report thereon to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

The Committee elected Lord Barnard to be Chairman, Bishop Jacob of St. Albans to be Vice-Chairman, and Canon Bullock-Webster and Mr. S. W. Flamank to be joint Honorary Secretaries. Of its members no fewer than twenty have now passed to their rest.

The Committee issued its Report in September, 1911, and its principal recommendations were summarised in twenty-three sections. These declared that it was imperative to co-ordinate seven essential departments of Church work ; that they should be organised primarily on a Diocesan basis ; that every Diocesan Conference should establish a Diocesan Board of Finance under its authority and responsible to it, and that Boards or Committees dealing with each section of Church work should be related to the Diocesan Board. Corresponding to this Diocesan organisation there should be a Central organisation with a Central Board of Finance and

Central Bodies dealing with the several sections of work before mentioned. It is important to notice that after consideration of their terms of reference the Committee definitely excluded the raising of money for the overseas work of the Church and for social purposes in England.

The Report was received with general approval and before three years had elapsed every Diocese had established its Diocesan Board of Finance. The Central Board of Finance was brought into being on the eve of the Great War. Thus originated the modern system of English ecclesiastical finance, and when the Church Assembly came into being the various stages in the ladder of financial organisation were already in existence and had merely to be brought into contact with the new legislative bodies. Thus from the Church Assembly downwards each stage of the legislative ladder had its corresponding financial organisation. The Church Assembly and the Central Board of Finance, the Diocesan Conference and the Diocesan Board of Finance, the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and the Finance Committee of the Parochial Church Council, are bodies having in their respective spheres an analogous inter-relationship.

The Constitution of the Assembly, which was prepared before the passing of the Church of England Powers Act, commonly called the Enabling Act, explains that the purpose for which the Assembly is created is " to deliberate on all matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision in respect thereof."

As I have tried to say in the earlier part of this chapter, finance is one of those matters which

vitally affects the Church of England, and accordingly it was the duty of the Assembly to make provision in respect of it. One of its first actions, therefore, was to establish a body called the Property and Revenues Commission with far-reaching terms of reference, in order that the exact details of the property and revenues of the Church of England might be known and where unsatisfactorily administered made the subject of reform. This Commission was appointed by the Archbishops in pursuance of a resolution of the Assembly passed at the Spring Session of 1921, and presented Interim Reports in the Summer of 1922 and the Spring of 1923, and its Final Report in the Summer of 1924.

Meantime, the Central Board of Finance had been reconstituted in the Summer Session of 1921 in such a manner as to bring it into close relationship with the Assembly. Its members, hitherto elected by the Diocesan Boards of Finance, were by the new arrangements elected by the representatives of the Diocese in the Church Assembly, each such Diocese electing one representative. From that time onwards the Assembly has committed its chief financial business, though not the whole of it, to the care of the Central Board. This has so grown in volume and importance that it is necessary to report to each Session of the Assembly.

It is not my purpose to enter into a close description of the financial Measures which the Assembly has passed, many of them dealing directly with the problems of the Church of England, since a description of the Pensions Measures and the Dilapidations Measures would extend far beyond the scope

of an article on finance. It would be true to say that most Measures of the Assembly have affected the management or control of Church properties or revenues in some shape or form. I must confine my attention to the work purely financial in character undertaken by the Central Board of Finance, and explain its general principles and summarise its results.

Almost the first task of the Assembly in organising its own finances was to define the area over which its work should extend. It was obviously necessary to weld the Central Board and Diocesan Board organisation into as coherent a whole as possible, leaving latitude and elasticity to the dioceses, but fixing the joint effort so as to avoid overlapping and a confusing number of appeals. The collection of money was therefore gradually by agreement with the dioceses made a function of the Diocesan Boards, and the money so collected through the parochial machinery was merely divided between the two bodies for administrative purposes. To the Central Board of Finance was referred the task of providing for Training of the Clergy, the Pensioning of the Clergy, the Maintenance of the Church Training Colleges, and the Central Pool by which help should be transferred from the more wealthy dioceses to the poorer. To the Diocesan Boards of Finance was assigned the maintenance of the Clergy, the task of Church Extension and the Maintenance of Church Schools.

But outside this area of direct Church Assembly effort there lay the work previously performed by large central societies. Attempts were made by Assembly Committees to link these central societies

up with Church Assembly organisation, but for various reasons, one of the strongest amongst them being the reluctance of the societies themselves, it was felt desirable to allow the existing condition of things to be maintained. The Corporation of the Church House, the Queen Victoria Clergy Fund, and the Central Committee for Church Defence and Instruction, were, however, closely joined with Church Assembly effort. The arrangement is at the moment working well.

Each parish in a diocese sends to the Diocesan Board of Finance a quota or proportion of the sum required by the Diocese for the year. This Diocesan total includes the amount required by the Church Assembly and on receipt of the parochial quota, the Diocesan Board of Finance remits to the Church Assembly the diocesan quota. A larger number of parishes are year by year paying 100 per cent. of their quotas, and consequently the diocesan contributions to the Church Assembly are also slowly rising, but in the early stages the work of the Central Board of Finance has been grievously hampered by the inability of the dioceses to remit the amounts for which they are asked.

This, then, is the basis of the ordinary income of the Church Assembly. From time to time special funds have been created for special purposes after agreement with the dioceses, and the Central Board of Finance has under its control certain funds and properties which increase in number and amount as the years pass. The chief of these is the Central Church Fund, which the Board hold as capital, the income being applied to such Church purposes as it may choose.

The general principles upon which this system has been established may be reckoned to be three in number. The first is the fellowship of parishes or of dioceses. It is obvious, I think, that there must be a great variety of capacity in such groups of organisation. In every diocese it is palpably clear that some parishes would always fail to provide the necessary material for Church organisation. The rapidly growing areas on the edge of urban districts may be cited as examples. Of these the great London County Council extension at Becontree is conspicuous. The country parishes into which the new city was intruded are entirely incapable of providing for its spiritual needs, and it is only, therefore, by fellowship that a reasonable standard of effectiveness can be reached. In other words, in Church organisation to-day the team spirit is essential.

The second principle is that of the general pooling of resources by which alone some things which hardly any parish, however rich, or hardly any diocese, however efficient, could hope by itself to finance, are accomplished. An excellent example is that of a pensions scheme for the clergy of the Church of England. To suggest forty-three pensions schemes, meaning one for each diocese in the two Provinces of Canterbury and York, is at once to disclose the futility of the proposal.

The third principle which the establishment of the Church Assembly did much to bring about, is that of democratic control. Many Church monies in the past have been administered in an autocratic and secretive way. The new system, which has come to stay, is based on an entirely different

principle. Free, frank and open discussion of budgets and administration is not merely permitted, but is encouraged. To answer that to disclose the financial affairs of the Church Assembly or of the Diocesan Conference or of the Parochial Church Council is not in the public interest can never now be given. Every item of the expenditure of the Church Assembly is, for example, discussed first in Sub-Committees, then in the Central Board of Finance, and finally in the Assembly itself before it is passed and sent to the dioceses, to form part of the diocesan budget. Similarly, in every Diocesan Conference the diocesan budget can be scrutinised and any item can be challenged. In all well-organised Parochial Church Councils the same principle stands. There may be in this latter class a number of laggards who have not yet risen to the ideal which underlies the organisation, but such parishes are diminishing in number, and it may be hoped will soon be extinct.

Last of all, the contributions made by the various component parts are adjusted to capacity. In other words, the quota is fixed in accordance with the capacity to pay. By capacity to pay, I do not mean that the idea of the individual contributor is to be taken as the standard. In apportioning quotas to parishes or to dioceses, some standard is fixed which generally takes into account what is already being spent, the number of possible contributors, and their individual means. The apportionments so fixed are then generally adjusted in accordance with the ideas agreed upon by the contributing parishes or dioceses. So far as I have been able to observe, there is no conspicuous

example of over-apportionment, either of dioceses or parishes.

There is not in the space permitted to me sufficient opportunity to enlarge upon the many ramifications of the new organisation, but I may perhaps refer to one or two of the successes and one or two of the failures which are attendant upon it. The Church found itself confronted after the War with a very serious condition, financially and structurally, of all its 28 Training Colleges for Teachers in Elementary Schools. Any appeal by way of donation and subscription for the large sum required would almost certainly have failed. But the financial basis of the Church Assembly organisation is very broad. There are nearly four million Church people on the Electoral Rolls, representing a portion only of the Church people of England to-day. The number of contributors to Church work is certainly 50 per cent. higher. This substantial basis of the financial structure was sufficiently sound to enable the Assembly, with the co-operation of its Bankers, to issue debentures which were taken up very widely all over the country. By this plan the Colleges in worst condition were rebuilt or amalgamated, and a further large scheme of structural improvements is contemplated and is certainly possible. It is safe to say that without the new organisation behind it such a plan could never have been formulated, still less carried into effect.

Similarly, the Assembly has been able to back a general appeal to the country to support what is known as the Sponsors Scheme for the remedying of the falling off in the supply of candidates for

Holy Orders. A Committee appointed by the Archbishops revealed the fact that this falling off was very largely attributable to financial causes. The men were available, but their parents had not sufficient means in these difficult days to maintain them during the long and expensive course of training required. A central organisation under the direction of the Assembly gave assurance to the philanthropic public that both the men and the training should be thoroughly suitable, and accordingly the matter has been brought to a successful issue.

The Assembly has also carried through a scheme for pensioning the clergy of the Church of England, which is sound, capable of infinite enlargement, and has already nearly abolished the abuses which were so deplorable a feature of ecclesiastical finance in the Victorian period.

On the other hand, as against its successful undertakings, we have to set the difficulty and perhaps the failure of maintaining in the minds of Church people the principles of Christian almsgiving, without which successful efforts may be merely like a day of summer which begins with glorious sunshine and ends with thunder and lowering clouds. Apportionments and quotas are in these days under unintelligent application too likely to take on the guise and nature and methods of income tax or rate collection. It cannot be too often reiterated that an unwilling gift is worse than useless, and merely defeats the object which the Church must constantly set before it in obedience to the commands of its Master. It is the spirit of the gift which is effectual, not only within the

heart of the giver, but also in the result of the application of the gift. The willing offerings of millions of Church people given freely in accordance with their ability are not only an indication of the life within, but are in themselves far more effectual than the princely donations of the super-millionaire.

If I may sum up the whole matter, I should feel inclined to say that the Church Assembly has already had an uplifting and far-reaching influence upon the character of Christian finance in this country. I look forward to a notable increase in that influence as great and as striking as that which has already been obtained. By means of the legislative functions of the Church Assembly financial affairs can be applied in the most suitable ways, and in spite of the difficulties under which we are now labouring, I am inclined to think that our prospects are most reassuring.

XI. THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SYNOPSIS

THE present organisation of education " broadbased upon a people's will "—Its character of growth gives a fundamental unity to English education—Grammar School foundations followed by efforts of the National Society and British and Foreign Schools Society to establish schools in all parishes —Progressive stages from the first State grant in 1833 to Royal Commission of 1858—Effects of the Acts of 1870, 1880, 1899, 1902–1918 and 1921—The Hadow Committee —Education in the endowed grammar schools of the old foundation based on " the humanities "—A privileged position achieved by seven of the old foundations—Endowments of other grammar schools restored to their original purpose by Act of 1869—Secondary education of girls mostly left to private enterprise—Woodard Schools established—Survey made of secondary education by Lord Bryce's Commission— Powers given to County and County Borough Councils in relation to secondary schools by Act of 1902—Advance in co-ordination of secondary education made possible by Act of 1918—Religious tests abolished at the two ancient universities in 1871—Theological faculties and the newer universities —The founding of theological colleges—Church Training Colleges for teachers founded 1840–1850—Attitude of Church Assembly seen in the majority Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Religious Education—Proposal for a Central Council for Religious Education—Recommendations relating to adult religious education—The teaching of religion within the State system of education—The Cowper-Temple clause —Need for a review of the dual system—The weak points of the Anson by-law—The need for closer affiliation of Church schools to the diocese—The responsibility of school managers in the future reorganisation—The primary object of Church teaching and its essential characteristic defined.

XI

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

By the Bishop of Carlisle

LIKE most English institutions, the present organisation of education is the result not of a clearly-seen and consistently-pursued policy but of a process of growth. It has grown, sometimes it would seem almost casually, at other times by those methods of compromise which are the genius of Englishmen. Problems as they arose have been met and overcome, not by far-sighted strategy, but by the application of common sense and good-humoured respect for the opinions of others. Whatever may be the defects and inconsistencies of our present system, it at least stands " broad-based upon a people's will."

That character of its growth has also given to all branches of English education a fundamental unity which is deeper than any that could be given by the most carefully planned systems of formal inter-relation. The problems of education from the universities down to the elementary school are essentially the same in so far as they rest upon national character and the needs and outlook of ordinary Englishmen. In religious education such a problem as that of the supply and training of candidates for Holy Orders depends upon how religious instruction is being given in village schools.

It is that which makes it possible to deal with religious education as one subject and to treat of it in a single article.

Historical Survey, 1800–1930

At the beginning of the 19th century the education of English children depended upon the old Grammar School foundations. These were maintained by their endowments. The motive of the foundations had usually been the founder's wish to help the locality in which he was interested, and there had been no co-ordinated effort to distribute them on any system throughout the country. Only a small minority of children received education in them. Children of the " working classes " mostly went into employment at seven years of age. The only education available for them was in the Sunday Schools, which developed with great rapidity after Robert Raikes's pioneer experiments in 1780. Brougham's Select Committee, appointed in 1816 to enquire into " the education of the lower orders," found that hardly more than 50 per cent. of the children were being educated in any schools.

Early in the century efforts to establish elementary schools in all parishes were made by Churchmen through the National Society, founded in 1811, and by Dissenting bodies through the British and Foreign School Society. The " British Schools " limited religious teaching to " general Christian principles"; the "National Schools" based religious instruction on the Church Catechism. Both groups of school used the monitorial system, under which the children were taught in one large room under

the eye of the master, but much of the teaching was done by " monitors," who taught the younger children what they themselves had just learned. In 1833, for the first time, the State made a grant, of £20,000, in aid of education. The grant was to be used for school buildings, and was divided between the two Societies.

The first Government Department set up to deal with education was a Committee of the Privy Council (1839). It had powers to establish schools, distribute grants and inspect assisted schools. By joint effort of the State and the Societies, a large number of schools came into being between 1840 and 1870. Efforts were also made to secure a supply of qualified teachers, and the teacher's certificate was first granted in 1848.

The Royal Commission appointed to make a survey of education in the years 1858-61 found that then nearly a million children were being educated in the grant-aided schools, and considerably over a million in schools which received no grant.

Mr. Forster's Act of 1870 was an effort to provide a complete system of elementary schools throughout the country. Popularly-elected school boards were set up in any districts where the school accommodation was inadequate. The boards had power to levy an education rate, to build new schools, to take over existing voluntary schools if the managers wished to transfer them, and to enforce compulsory attendance. Religious instruction, subject to a conscience clause, was *permitted*, but under a clause proposed by Mr. Cowper Temple and commonly referred to under his name, " no catechism or religious formulary which

is distinctive of any particular denomination" might be taught.

After the passing of the Act many new Church schools as well as Board schools were built. By 1880 school accommodation had been provided in all areas, and the Mundella Act of that year enforced school attendance upon all children up to 10 years of age. In 1893 the school attendance age was raised to 11, in 1899 to 12, and in 1900 power was given to local authorities to raise it to 14.

From the time of Lowe's "Revised Code" (1862) until the close of the 19th century elementary teaching was largely controlled by the system of making government grants in the way of "payment by results." This system grievously hampered progress in the teaching both of secular subjects and of religion.

The Act of 1899 established a Board of Education as a central authority to supervise secondary as well as elementary education.

The Education Act of 1902 was the first Act with that inclusive title. Its most important effect was to bring education into the ordinary machinery of local government. The county councils and county boroughs were given complete control of elementary education within their area, and laid under legal obligation to provide it. But boroughs and urban districts with a population above 20,000 were given separate control within the county over elementary, though not over secondary, education. Under the Act the newly-constituted local education authorities were made responsible for the maintenance of all public elementary schools within their area, but in the

case of Church schools the trustees retained possession of the buildings and the Managers were responsible for keeping the buildings in good repair. The appointment of teachers remained in the hands of the Managers, though the consent of the local authority was required. Such consent might only be withheld on educational grounds. The "non-provided" schools were thus maintained in being but brought under a system of dual control, being subject partly to the jurisdiction of the statutory body of managers and partly to that of the Local Education Authority. A large proportion of the endowments of the Church schools was transferred to the relief of local rates, since the cost of maintenance in respect of teachers' salaries, school cleaning, heating and lighting, etc., was now provided by the local authority.

A great programme for progress and co-ordination in public education was set out in Mr. Fisher's Education Act of 1918, but the country was not yet ready for it and much of the Act became a dead letter. It was displaced by the consolidating Education Act of 1921, under which all State-provided and State-aided education is now administered.

In 1924 the Board of Education appointed a Consultative Committee, of which Sir Henry Hadow was made chairman, to advise upon the best courses of study for children who remain in schools, other than secondary schools, up to the age of 15. The Committee's Report contained as its principal recommendation that at the age of 11 pupils from primary schools should normally be transferred to a different school or, failing that, to a different type

of education from that given to pupils under the age of 11. The recommendations of the Committee were communicated by the Board of Education to the local education authorities in " Circular 1397 " and further explained in the Board's pamphlet " The New Prospect in Education," and the authorities were called upon to produce programmes for carrying out the reorganisation within the next three years.

The endowed grammar schools of old foundation, which stood for secondary education at the beginning of the 19th century, based their education upon " the humanities "—the study of Greek and Latin literature. They were still formally under the direction of the bishops and clergy, and religious instruction was always given in accordance with the doctrine of the Church of England. In general the teachers came from the universities where " tests " were still enforced.

Seven of the old foundations (Winchester, Eton, Westminster, Rugby, Harrow, Shrewsbury and Charterhouse) achieved a privileged position, which was confirmed by the Public Schools Act of 1868. They owed their high place in education during the 19th century largely to the work of Samuel Butler at Shrewsbury and afterwards of Thomas Arnold at Rugby, who set a new standard of learnin the public schools and, still more, a Christian standard of character and service.

The grammar schools, other than the privileged seven, were brought under a measure of State supervision by the Endowed Schools Act of 1869. This restored their endowments, at least in part,

to their original purpose of providing education for poor scholars. Some of the schools, under the guidance of great headmasters, such as Edward Thring at Uppingham, James Prince Lee at King Edward's School, Birmingham, and F. W. Walker at the Manchester Grammar School, attained an educational standing at least as high as that of the seven recognised " public schools." It was part of the intention of the Endowed Schools Act that the endowments should so far as possible be used or the educational benefit of girls as well as of boys. But for the most part the secondary education of girls was left to private enterprise. The Girls' Public Day School Company was established in 1872.

Among new schools established during the 19th century a group of great importance to the Church is that known as the " Woodard Schools." These were founded by the Rev. Nathaniel Woodard, Canon of Manchester, between the years 1848 and 1891, and placed under the control of the Corporation of SS. Mary and Nicholas. His purpose for the schools was that in them the teaching " of the Catholic Faith as it is now set forth in the Book of Common Prayer " should always be associated with sound learning. During his lifetime several boys' schools, of which Lancing College was the principal, were established ; and since his death in 1891 the scheme has been extended to girls' schools.

In the last decade of the century a Royal Commission, with Lord Bryce as its chairman, made a survey of the whole chaotic field of secondary education and opened the way for reorganising it " into an efficient and satisfactory system."

The Education Act of 1902 gave to County and County Borough Councils the power to establish and maintain secondary schools of their own, and also to give financial help to existing grammar schools, technical schools and other forms of " higher " education. By the Act of 1918 the exercise of this power was made obligatory. A great advance in the co-ordination of secondary education in all areas became possible. Board of Education regulations gradually made it clear that " secondary " education should imply a general education, of a higher standard than that of the elementary schools, for scholars up to and beyond the age of 16 years. It was further required that scholars in the secondary schools should follow a graded course of instruction for at least four years, thus implying that the normal age of entry should be 12 years. At least 25 per cent. of the places in all grant-aided schools must now be " free places," and local authorities have power to increase this percentage and also to supplement the help given by grants to individual scholars towards the cost of books, travelling and maintenance. Denominational teaching may, of course, be given in " aided " schools ; and it may also be given in " provided " secondary schools to scholars whose parents require it, though it must be at the cost of the denomination.

During the earlier part of the 19th century the two ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge stood as pillars of the Established Church. At Oxford all students were required to sign the Thirty-Nine Articles on entering the University, whilst at Cambridge an undergraduate could only

receive his degree after making a declaration that he was a member of the Church of England. A Commission appointed by the Government in 1850 to investigate the condition of the two universities brought about many reforms, and an Act of Parliament in 1871 abolished the religious tests. Meantime University College, London, had been opened in 1828 as a definitely non-theological college, though it was followed almost immediately by King's College as a Church College for London. London University as an examining university, free of religious tests, was established in 1836. In the north of England the wise munificence of a Manchester merchant founded Owens College in 1850, which afterwards became a constituent college of the Victoria University (1880) and ultimately a self-contained university (1904). By the will of the founder religious instruction was not excluded from the college, but no religious doctrine " reasonably offensive " to the consciences of any teachers and students might be taught in the classes. It thus proved possible to constitute a free theological faculty within the University, to which were affiliated the theological colleges already established by different religious bodies—Church of England, Primitive Methodist, Baptist, Moravian, Unitarian, United Methodist, Independent and Wesleyan. The faculty has had as its teachers scholars of such reputation as Dr. Moulton and Professor Peake, and has set a high standard for the training of ministers both for the Church of England and for the Free Churches. It is likely that such theological faculties will be founded at other of the new universities.

The abolition of religious tests in the older universities led to the founding of separate theological colleges for training candidates for Holy Orders. These colleges were attached rather to the diocese than to the universities, as at Ely, Lichfield, Cuddesdon, Lincoln and elsewhere. This has tended to lay stress on the devotional side of their training but has sometimes been a weakness on the intellectual side. The first to be established deliberately at the gates of a university in order that the students might attend the greater portion of their lectures within the university itself was Egerton Hall in Manchester, which was opened by Bishop Knox in 1908.

Training colleges for teachers were first founded by the Church in the years 1840–1850, and there are now some thirty Church colleges for training elementary teachers. One of the most important changes in their position was brought about by the regulation issued by the Board of Education in 1907, which laid down that in respect of half the vacancies to be filled each year the Church colleges shall not require the candidates to be members of the Church of England. This regulation, which at the time seemed likely to cripple the Church colleges, has rather tended to widen their influence, since it has increased the number of students who go from Church colleges to teach in council schools. As the result of an Archbishops' Commission appointed in 1916, all the colleges were federated under the guidance of a Central Board of Supervision which distributes the money found for the colleges by the Church Assembly. Under the Church Training Colleges Capital Fund com-

plete schemes of reconstruction have been carried out for three of the large colleges—Chelsea, Whitelands and Warrington—and the Central Board of Finance has now before it a Report prepared by Mr. R. G. Mayor upon the present condition and prospects of all the colleges. One important new foundation is that of St. Christopher's College at Blackheath, opened in 1909, which provides courses of training for Sunday School organisers and teachers.

The present Situation and the Report of the Archbishops' Commission to the Assembly.

It is not the intention of the present article to make note of all the points at which, during the course of its debates, the Church Assembly has touched upon the subject of religious education. For the general attitude of the Assembly towards the ideals and the practical problems of religious education is clearly and conveniently seen in the majority Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Religious Education, which was presented to the Assembly in October, 1929, and accepted by it. It must, however, be remembered that the main Report was signed by 18 only of the members of the Commission and that a minority Report " expressing our dissent from some portions of the Report " was signed by six members.

Perhaps the most important conclusion reached by the Commission was one which, if carried into operation, would in future relieve the Church Assembly of much of its responsibility for religious education by setting up an authority charged with dealing with every branch of religious education.

This authority would be a Central Council of the Church for Religious Education and would have administrative as well as advisory powers. "It must be competent to declare the opinion of the Church in educational matters and to give it practical effect." The new Council would be formed by asking the National Society so to reform its constitution and enlarge the scope of its operations as to fit it for this new task. The reformed constitution would include eighteen members elected from the Assembly, and these eighteen members would form an Advisory Education Committee of the Assembly. "The duty of such a Council would be to keep Religious Education in all its aspects under continual review; to gauge, and, having gauged, authoritatively to express the mind of the Church upon the aim, meaning, and methods of Religious Education; to help to systematise the work in the various parts of the educational field so as to direct it towards the accepted goal; officially to advise the Church Assembly as to the legislative or administrative steps required to adapt "our casual system of religious education to growing and changing needs"; and to receive from the Church Assembly both the authority and the means to bring its decisions into practical effect. Moreover, it would be a primary function of the Council in all its work to keep in view, for the furtherance of the religious education of the English people, the relations of the Church with (*a*) the State; (*b*) other Churches and religious bodies; (*c*) the Church overseas."

The primary consideration in accepting such a proposal is that the setting up of the new Council

shall not impair the proved usefulness of the National Society. For 120 years the National Society has represented the Church in relation to education, and its usefulness under the guidance of its present secretary is now greater and covers a wider field than at any earlier period. This usefulness is largely due to the fact that it has not attempted to dictate a national policy to the schools but to advise and to help. It is the genius of the English people to shrink from central control and to rely on local initiative and responsibility. Indeed the tendency of the Report of the Commission is to look for reform in our methods of religious education rather to local authorities than to a central government. Care must, therefore, be taken that the establishment of the new Council shall not impair that freedom in experiment and that local initiative and sense of responsibility which are such valuable elements in any educational system.

Yet the Church of England obviously needs some such representative body as the suggested Council to give clear expression to its ideals and to formulate its opinions upon what should be one of its chief and primary activities. The National Society is of necessity departmental in character; and the Church Assembly, being a debating body, is ill adapted for the patient pursuance of a settled policy. The Assembly is, moreover, much occupied with other matters. Some such Council as that proposed by the Commission is clearly needed.

The first duty of the Council will be by patient and sympathetic investigation to learn what is the common mind of the Church of England as it is slowly forming itself by the work and study and

prayers of the Spirit-bearing body under many varieties of local circumstances. This task accomplished, there will follow the duty, no less difficult, of giving articulate and clear expression of the Church's mind on educational matters both to her own members and to the State.

The relation of the Council to teaching in the universities will need specially careful consideration. Universities are naturally and rightly jealous of their own intellectual autonomy and are apt to be specially sensitive towards any proposal which might seem to impair their absolute freedom in their teaching and pursuit of truth. And yet in no sphere of religious education has there been a more remarkable achievement of co-operation between different religious denominations than in the teaching and in the research carried on in some of our universities. Students of varying religious professions share the same lectures and take the same examinations. As students, approaching theology in a like spirit of humility, they attain to a real unity in their common pursuit of truth.

The recent great increase in the number of secondary schools has at once increased both the difficulties and the opportunities in giving religious education. Teachers who might feel no difficulty in giving religious instruction to quite young children are apt to undertake with reluctance the presentation of religious truth to children whose critical intelligence has been awakened. The teaching of definite religious truth in an age of great uncertainty demands the highest qualities of heart and mind. Yet such teaching is especially needed by children of the secondary-school age if

they are to be trained adequately to become responsible members of the Church. When all belief is exposed to intensive criticism the children themselves will find the acceptance of definite religious truth to be difficult, and their acceptance must be won by teaching which appeals not only to authority but to their own deepest intuitions already made manifest in their experience of life. On the other hand, the very difficulties discovered in the imparting of such instruction remove from it some at least of the dangers attendant upon the giving of denominational instruction in primary schools. Children of the secondary-school age are freer to accept or to reject doctrines which, if they are to be worth teaching, must commend themselves to their religious conscience. Such doctrines, if they are to be accepted worthily, can only be accepted on the ground of their truth, and the children themselves are of an age to realise this. Moreover, the problem of fitting religious instruction into a curriculum overloaded with other subjects is especially acute in schools of a secondary type. The pressure of material interests upon the parents of children who are approaching the age at which they must earn their own living, as also upon the children themselves, is all too likely to leave little time or inclination for spiritual ideals ; and in the preparation of pupils in a multitude of subjects for examinations which are the entrance to most of the professions, religion is relegated too frequently to a subordinate place. If what seems to be specially needed is the permeation of the whole atmosphere of instruction by the spirit of religion, the spirit which is taught and exhibited chiefly by conduct

and by life, yet much of the spirit of religion can be taught and learned if the subjects and methods of instruction show at once real knowledge and an utter reverence for truth. The new note of sincerity, which is characteristic of religious inquiry in the present age, has, in fact, been learned from the honest investigations of natural science ; and the effective teaching of religion in secondary schools seems to require that there shall be teachers charged with that special task and sufficiently free from other school duties to devote time to the patient and humble study as well as to the teaching of religious truth.

One of the most important recommendations as to what shall be the future work of the Council is that which deals with the educational work of the Church outside the schools and the universities. It was clearly felt by the Commission that it was necessary that there should be co-ordination and considerable extension of the hitherto sporadic efforts made by the Church to provide for adult religious education, whether through parochial Bible classes or through more completely organised schemes of study such as those of the Church Tutorial Classes Association. This desire found authoritative expression in the Archbishops' Pastoral Letter of 1929, with its expressed hope, " Let every parish be a school of sacred learning." That letter appealed first to the clergy for a new fellowship of study, and steps have already been taken in most dioceses to make answer to this appeal. Schemes of study under the title of " A Way of Renewal," have been published, and are being worked out by the clergy meeting in groups in their

rural deaneries. This meeting in a fellowship of prayer and study which was inaugurated as an immediate response to the Archbishops' appeal is likely to become one of the ordinary and permanent activities of the life of the clergy. Steps are also being taken to extend the use of these schemes to the laity, and, if possible, to secure the co-operation in a concerted effort for advanced religious instruction of all the agencies which have this object in view.

But adult religious education is only one part of the problem which the Commission faced. There is still the question of how best to combine the religion of the day school with that taught on Sundays, at present only too frequently taught by teachers imperfectly equipped for their task though deserving of all that the Church can give them by way of further instruction. Some of the most valuable of the Commission's recommendations are those dealing with the grading of the Sunday school and the provision of parochial preparation classes for teachers and of fuller training courses on a diocesan basis.

Up to this point the Commission's recommendations deal with matters of religious education, which lie within the competence and authority of the Church. The next group of recommendations deals with the teaching of religion within the State system of education. Some of the difficulties inherent in what is called the " dual system " will already have become apparent in the preceding pages. The Report asserts that the system has, on the whole, " worked reasonably well." The difficulties have at times been accentuated by politicians,

but within the schools themselves and in the actual administration of education, good will and common sense have surmounted many stumbling-blocks. No religious denomination is likely to be completely satisfied with the ideals or achievements of the Education Act of 1870. The growing recognition that religion cannot be imparted by instruction only, and can, indeed, only be apprehended within a living fellowship, is a convincing sign that what has been achieved under that Act is imperfect and incomplete. Yet could such a declaration have been published to the Church as the declaration concerning the authority of Holy Scripture contained in the third Resolution of the Lambeth Conference of 1930, if the Bishops had not been able to rely upon the understanding of a generation instructed in some at least of the main results of modern critical methods and more cognisant than their forefathers of the true relation of religious experience to scientific investigation? The resolution declares: "It is no part of the purpose of the Scriptures to give information on those themes which are the proper subject matter of scientific enquiry, nor is the Bible a collection of separate oracles, each containing a final declaration of truth. The doctrine of God is the centre of its teaching, set forth in its books 'by divers portions and in divers manners.' As Jesus Christ is the crown, so also is He the criterion of all revelation. We would impress upon all Christian people the necessity of banishing from their minds ideas concerning the character of God which are inconsistent with the character of Jesus Christ. We believe that the work of our Lord Jesus Christ is continued by the

Holy Spirit, who not only interpreted Him to the Apostles, but has in every generation inspired and guided those who seek truth."

The Cowper Temple clause which in letter only forbids the teaching of particular religious formularies in State-provided schools has in practice been interpreted as excluding all denominational religious instruction from the schools. While it would clearly be neither right nor wise to attempt the repeal of the Cowper Temple clause or to insist upon the strict letter as against the interpretation commonly placed upon it, yet the hope for the future lies largely in the possibility that the clause may be felt more and more to be superfluous. As the religious teaching in our schools continues to improve both in its methods and in the clearness of its ideals, the dangers which many people have discovered in what has been called denominational instruction will be seen to lie rather in a prejudiced point of view than in the nature of that instruction. Indeed, while educational theory has moved widely away from the belief that there is a residuum of faith common to all Christian denominations, yet in its increasing preoccupation with the problems of how best to bring the child minds of this and the next generation into a direct relationship with God in Christ, it is laying foundations for future unity not only in education but in the deepest regions of spiritual life.

It is, however, from the practical necessities within the schools themselves that the most pressing need for a review of the dual system arises. The raising of the school-leaving age to 14, and the provision for a large extension of post-

primary education has created a new situation with its own special problems and difficulties. The reorganisation suggested in the Hadow Report has not only become the policy of the Board of Education but has been accepted by the Church. That acceptance was authoritatively declared by Archbishop Davidson at a meeting of the National Society in 1928 when he said that the Church could say to the Board, " We are just as keen for educational progress along these lines as you are ; we are committed up to the hilt to give practical as well as theoretical support." In giving such practical support the Church is bound to do its utmost to facilitate the grouping of the older children in senior schools, yet it must equally retain its right to criticise any proposals, especially where such proposal may seem to conflict with its pastoral responsibility for the welfare of a parish as a whole.

The system of dual control, by which Church schools are partly under the control of the Managers and partly under that of the Local Education Authority, has admittedly on the whole worked well. It has at times been hampering to Local Education Authorities in their administration, but it has secured a broad basis for education and has made both variety and experiment in education more possible. But it is undoubtedly a serious obstacle to the reorganisation of education planned by the Board of Education. The objections to the system are (*a*) the ownership of the school buildings by the Managers, who are often hindered through lack of money from improving them to modern standards or enlarging them to meet a local increase of population ; (*b*) the status of

teachers as servants of the Managers and not of the Local Authority. This appointment of teachers by the Managers, although it gives to Managers a valuable sense of responsibility for the teaching in the schools, is often disliked by the teachers themselves, who feel that (1) the teacher is responsible to a small group of local people who may not always be sympathetic to educational ideals ; (2) promotion of teachers within an area will not always depend on merit but on the type of school ; (3) Local Managers may appoint teachers for other than educational reasons and may not have sufficient regard for due qualification. That there is this danger in dual control, the Church itself may admit. On the other hand the fact that Church teaching is given to all children in Church schools is seldom felt as a serious objection by the parents. The Conscience Clause is always available but is rarely used.

The Church could rightly surrender both the ownership of school buildings and also the appointment of teachers if religious instruction in all schools and Church teaching for all Church children could be safeguarded by other means. It was the possibility of finding such safeguards that was the subject of the negotiations which led to the proposals incorporated in Sir Charles Trevelyan's Education Bill of 1930. Although it was found necessary to drop the Bill, it is likely that similar proposals will again be put forward, and they must be considered with an open mind. But until definite and solid safeguards as to the religious instruction for all children, and particularly for the instruction of the children for whom the Church is

immediately responsible, have been secured, the only policy for Church School Managers is to retain their buildings, reconditioned where necessary, and their rights in the appointment of teachers.

It has been suggested that the problem of giving continued Church teaching to children transferred at 11 years of age from Church schools to provided senior schools might be met if the Anson bye-law were adopted by all the local authorities. The bye-law provides that if the parent of any child has notified the Managers in writing of his intention to withdraw the child from instruction in religious subjects for the purpose of receiving instruction elsewhere, and the Local Education Authority is satisfied with the provision made for that purpose, the child shall not be required to attend school during the period allotted in the time-table for religious education. The adoption of the bye-law would, therefore, make it possible for religious instruction to be given to Church children in the church or some other building apart from the school, provided that the children were brought to school in time for the marking of the register at the beginning of the secular instruction. Where the parochial clergy are prepared to instruct the children in that way the bye-law provides a valuable opportunity for Church teaching. But it can never be treated as an adequate solution of the problem of religious instruction in the schools. The problem is one to be settled within the school, and cannot be solved by the mere withdrawal of the children. It is neither fair to the Local Education Authority nor to the head teacher that we should ask them to make religious instruction a

primary concern in the school, and yet withdraw a number of children from the instruction given there. The only true solution is that the quality of the religious instruction given within the schools shall be brought to such a standard of scholarship, given in such a Christian spirit, and brought into such immediate touch with the children's own lives, that it is a true preparation for their life as children of God in the world.

One necessary step at the present time is a closer affiliation of the Church schools to the diocese. The Education Act only recognises individual bodies of managers as responsible for their several schools. But reorganisation requires some authority covering a wider area than the parish. In practice the Diocesan Board of Education is commonly recognised as a valuable advisory body with much moral force, but it has no legal status under the Act. It is, however, difficult to see how there can be more formal recognition of diocesan boards under the present dual system. The appointment of teachers by the diocesan board would help to secure properly qualified teachers and more systematic promotion by merit. But the Local Education Authority would naturally shrink from the establishment of a body controlling at times the majority of teachers within their area.

The inevitable effect of reorganisation will be that the majority of the present Church schools in the villages will become junior and infant schools for the children under 11. It is well worth while for the Church to maintain its schools for these younger children. Where there is a choice for the Church school to become *either* a senior *or* a

junior school, the choice of a junior school is probably the better in ordinary cases. It is, however, essential that in all areas there should be some Church senior schools. They are necessary in order to secure that the standard of religious instruction for the older children is a progressive one. Without such challenge from Church schools where the religious instruction is a primary concern, the religious instruction of the older children in council schools will inevitably tend to be conservative and limited by a stereotyped syllabus.

It is very important that when the older children are removed from a Church school the school managers should not feel that there is any lessening of their responsibility, but should at once set to work to put the school buildings and playground into the best possible condition for the younger children, and also devote thought to planning out its syllabus of religious instruction to meet the needs of children who will be in a Church school to the age of 11 and afterwards in a provided school where the Cowper Temple clause is in force. Where, too, the children are grouped for school in a wider area than that of the parish it is still of great importance that the parish should keep an oversight of its own children. This oversight can be particularly helpful in respect of the conditions under which the children are conveyed to and from school, the arrangements for the midday meal and for drying clothes, and the provision of shelter where children must wait by the roadside for the school 'bus.

There is also a great opportunity for the Church, with the consent of the Local Education Authority,

to start nursery classes where accommodation is made available by the withdrawal of the older children.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion of this brief survey of the present state of religious education in England and of the more pressing problems that await solution, it may be of service to offer one or two suggestions by way of answer to certain more general questions.

The enquiry is sometimes made, what is the real value of Church teaching? What place should it rightly occupy if schools should be reorganised, a sufficient supply of teachers properly trained and qualified to give religious instruction provided, and a council of men and women interested and instructed alike in education and religion secured in every area?

One answer might well be given that the primary object of Church teaching in a non-provided school should always be to secure and observe a right proportion alike in instruction in the Bible and in the presentation of the Faith. Committees responsible for the drawing-up of a religious syllabus are apt at present to confound the important with the unimportant, and in their anxiety to avoid denominational differences to obscure or slur over what is essential in the full presentation of fundamental Christian truth. The narrative of the Crucifixion or teaching based upon the narrative may be excluded from the syllabus upon the same grounds and with the same desire to avoid hurting the susceptibilities of young children as might reasonably lead to the exclusion from Old Testa-

ment lessons of the story of Elisha and the bears. Nor, too frequently, is any real attempt made to bring Biblical instruction into any real relation with the children's own lives and the environments in which they live. Most education authorities will not carry religious instruction beyond the historical limit of the New Testament. Yet the study of Christianity as it develops and grows through the ages is the best corrective to denominational prejudice or obscurantism. Again, present-day religion seems aloof from the real world of men's interests, precisely because the sanctions of morality are left detached from modern practice, relegated from childhood to a Biblical age remote altogether from the concerns and problems of to-day. Simple teaching upon the history of Christian discipleship and upon the fresh revelations of Christian grace and opportunity discoverable in history would do much to correct this tendency.

And finally, the essential characteristic of Church teaching is that it should be scholarly teaching. The very belief upon which alone the distinction between denominational and undenominational teaching can be upheld and tolerated is a belief in truth. Yet to truth there is no real opposite save error. And if in education the real distinction, transcending all lesser and less important differences, is between good teaching and bad teaching, the main task of the Church of England should be to secure that in all its homes of education, from primary schools to universities, its teaching should be good.

EPILOGUE

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE FUTURE

SYNOPSIS

THE future of the Assembly seems secure—Its powers of development and leadership—It is one more embodiment of the political genius of the English people—Voluntary registration—Alleged indifference about signing the Electoral Roll—Comparison with Parliamentary register—The Roll an extraordinary achievement—Reply to criticisms—Lack of contact between electorate and their representatives a real defect—The Assembly an expression of the *sensus communis* of English Church people—Devolution, never more than a theory in the political sphere, an experience in the Assembly—Prayer Book controversy—The right of Parliament in a sense to intervene in everything—The place of Convocation: could Houses of Bishops and Clergy sitting separately perform all its duties or are its rights incapable of transfer?—The future of the Assembly dependent upon the parochial clergy—Financial work—Emergence of order out of chaos—Need of controlling intention evolved by a corporate mind—Inelastic system should be avoided—Overseas work: growing collaboration between societies and Assembly—Development of Church's mission according to a settled plan now within reach—Education: difficult to foresee whether dual system will end—Justification for the Assembly found in raising the tone of the spiritual life in the Church of England.

THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY AND THE FUTURE

An Editorial Epilogue. By Canon Partridge

HAS the Church Assembly come to stay? Or is it a passing phase in the world of political experiment? Has its work been so badly performed that it must give way to something more efficient? Has it produced peace or friction? Has it made for the advancement of religion or not? Is it an incubus? Or is it the real hope of the future?

These and many like questions have been stirring the serenity of our ecclesiastical minds in the last few years. They add piquancy to our affairs, savour to the dish of church herbs.

So far as any future can be assured in a world of change, the future of the Assembly seems secure. Whatever the path of the Church of England in the next century, be it in nearer or more remote association with the State, it seems almost inevitable that its affairs will be managed by a body with governing and legislative powers like the Assembly. This has now had a ten years' trial, and the first ten years have proved that it is a body well able to do the work which was given to it. It has had its chance and has seized it. That chance might have been wasted by carelessness, by folly, by arrogance. But the Assembly has been found to possess powers of development and of leadership which it would be difficult to disregard in any future

reconstruction. Is it worth while asking how this has come about?

There are two ways in which the Assembly will be recorded as yet one more embodiment of the political genius of the English people, and it is herein that its strength and its future largely consist. The first is the success of a system of voluntary registration, and the second is the working out of the first English experiment in political devolution.

Now voluntary registration has never previously been possible. It has always been necessary to use public funds or public officials to get a working Parliamentary register. For voluntary associations pressure amounting to persecution has been required to ensure success. But the Church Assembly has used no power of excommunication to lay hold of its opportunity. It is curious that so much has been written and said about the failure of the electoral rolls, and the indifference of Church people about the inscribing of their names. No doubt much more will be written in the future. Some prominent churchmen are perturbed about it. Some even think that the system may not continue because the number of electors is only a mere four millions. Inquiry into these facts is, then, not a mere waste of time, for although it cannot be allowed that the standard of a democratic system is to be measured by the number of votes cast in elections, and although the Church is not a pure democracy, and although the achievements in legislation of ten years are reassuring, it is more than interesting—it is essential—to know why success is deemed to be failure.

The so-called indifference is largely attributable to the misgivings about the Assembly from the outset which many clergy strongly felt. At the elections to the House of Laity in 1919 the first rolls could not be expected to be large because they *were* the first. During the first five years many parish priests were displeased by the Measures added to the statute book, and misgivings changed to active opposition. The influence of the parish clergy is immense, and the lay people followed the lead which was given them, and were not so much indifferent as hostile. The rolls in some places were then but grudgingly compiled. Even so, their size is an unexpected revelation of strength, which has surprised not only the statisticians who are accustomed to study figures, but many Church people also. For consider the unavoidable features which acted as heavy drags upon the wheel of this new political vehicle. The roll, whereon the English elector, with all his carelessness for his political privileges, is only inscribed by his own motion, is made and kept by volunteers. It has had to weather the active opposition of some of the best of the clergy, and the lethargy (in this respect) of some of the bishops. The privileges gained by those who were enrolled were not greatly attractive. Yet this roll contains now nearly four million names. How would the parliamentary register stand in similar conditions ? It is a mistake to compare the four millions of the Church Electoral Roll with the total population of the country, though it has been pointed out, with triumphant satisfaction and sometimes not a little malice, that four millions out of thirty-five is only about 11 per cent. of

the whole. But do such critics really expect that children in arms should sign a Form of Declaration that they are over the age of 18? Then why compare the four millions with thirty-five? The number of persons above the age of eighteen resident in England was at the time of the last reliable computation rather less than 24 millions. So one person in every six of those who could, in the wildest flight of fancy, be electors has, of his own act, will and deed, chosen to go to the trouble of signing a form and of declaring himself as eligible to vote. If these people all went to church on the same day and at the same hour with their children, the churches could not contain them. Most would be crowded to suffocation, and many would need loud speakers to enable the overflow congregations in the churchyards to follow the service. We may well pause, if we are wise and reflecting men, to think a little more before we are stampeded into the view that the arguments about the failure of the electoral rolls are convincing. When all this is remembered the roll must be reckoned to be an extraordinary achievement of the present day. It seems doubtful whether in the long course of her history the Church of England has ever had a larger proportion of active, devout and loyal adherents.

The roll has been criticised from other points of view. Those who attack the Church Assembly have also enlarged upon what they describe as the poor quality of the voters. But these are the very people who exercise the Parliamentary franchise, and, anyhow, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot fairly say in the same breath that the

roll is too large and too small. And besides all this, the criticism is an unwarranted attack upon all religious people, and not merely the Church of England folk. It really is to say that those who care for the things of religion, are less reliable voters than the Gallios, the worldly, the indifferent, or than those who are immersed in the affairs of the world, the flesh and the devil. This would be amusing if it were not insulting not only to Church people, but to every religious man and woman of whatever denomination. This argument can also be subjected to the test of the facts. You may consult any Church roll at any church door, and find it a collection of names which includes at least a few representatives of all the best elements of the population of the place, old as well as young, rich as well as poor, highly educated and professionally skilled as well as unlearned. It is a selective list of the best and most reliable inhabitants. Is it really possible to describe any such roll of electors as of poor quality? Then how can the sum total of such lists be so described?

Others are pleased to say that the electoral roll is ineffective because of the method of indirect election. This is a different point. It is, however, a point of more substance. But those who urge this objection have to ask why indirect election has earned the commendation of constitutional thinkers as a way of counterbalancing the weaknesses of a purely democratic system. Is the result of universal direct suffrage so clearly more advantageous? An affirmative answer to that question is not easily given by a candid thinker. At the same time indirect election is not an essential element of the Church

Assembly system, and was adopted for a variety of reasons, the chief of which was the expense involved in direct elections. The time may soon come when a scheme for a more direct method may be suggested and even tried, but the election of the chief authority in more stages than one has yet to be proved in practice to produce in the end a less competent or representative Parliament than the other. And, of course, a change can be made without affecting the position or stability of the Assembly.

It would be disingenuous, however, to try to disguise the dissatisfaction of many thoughtful Churchmen at the lack of contact between the electorate and their representatives in the Assembly which indirect election frequently entails. Here again comparison with the Parliamentary system may lead to exaggeration. But it is true that many Church people could not tell the names of their representatives, and have little chance of meeting them either in public or in private. That defect should, and must, be remedied in the future.

But when all these things are considered, is it extravagant to think or claim that the future of the Assembly, broad-based on such a foundation as 4,000,000 adult voters, is well assured, or in the meantime that its decisions are in a real sense an expression of the *sensus communis* of English Church people ? That general feeling of Churchmen may sometimes be wrong, it may sometimes change, it may sometimes be different from the feeling of the nation at large, but what it is cannot be doubtful or that it is fairly interpreted by the Assembly.

We may now turn to the second aspect of political genius, which gives confidence to those who think far ahead about the future. Devolution in the strictly political sphere never succeeded in becoming more than a theory. In the year immediately following the War one of the most forceful personalities of his generation, himself a great Churchman, with the inspiration and help of one or two counsellors not unknown in the Assembly, succeeded in making it for a short time a real political issue, but at his premature death the question lapsed into constitutional oblivion. In the political sphere it has never again become a living reality. Its supporters proposed the devolution of Parliamentary legislation in geographical areas to subordinate legislatures with an Imperial Parliament to deal with Imperial affairs, and to control the whole. If this plan had succeeded it is quite likely that the issue which has recently been raised as to the powers of Parliament in Church affairs would have been deferred for many a long day. For the plan would have confined the votes of the Welsh, the Scottish, and the Irish members respectively of the House of Commons to Welsh or Scottish or Irish affairs, and left the control of affairs relating to England only to the English members. Many statesmen felt, however, that such a plan of devolution by geographical areas had serious drawbacks and would prove impossible. Shortly afterwards, however, and as it were by chance, and apparently without connecting the two issues, Parliament itself embarked upon an experiment in devolution, not in geographical areas but in a specialised department of life and activity.

The Church Assembly is the first result. The implications were probably not entirely foreseen. The results of political movements and of constitutional change rarely are foreseen. But after ten years it is possible to look forward in the light of successes and failures and to prophesy that the Church Assembly has not merely come to stay but that it will be imitated. There are other activities in the life and work of England which Parliament may well subject to a similar plan by appointing other legislative bodies to work within limited fields.

The future of the Church Assembly must, therefore, be also examined in the light of its proved ability to fulfil the functions of a body to which the fortunes of this political experiment, hitherto untried, have been committed. Has it acted loyally in accordance with the intentions of Parliament? Has it produced legislation of a type concerning which Parliament might wholeheartedly confess that it was of the standard and quality of the ancient legislation of the realm? Has it been a really deliberative body, acting with prudence and foresight? Has it set aside sectional, party and individual interest for the common good? Has it been able so to avoid falling into error that it will be thought to be expedient to extend its power? If these and similar questions may fairly be answered with a cautious affirmative, then this first experiment in devolution has so turned out that the statesmen of England, faced with world-wide and intricate Imperial problems, are more likely to try to develop and establish the system than to destroy it. In an age of political experimenta-

tion, when failures are more conspicuous than successes, the reality of success will not be lightly disregarded.

But you will say that all this fails when we remember the Prayer Book controversy and its issues. On the contrary, a clear conception of the process of devolution removes many misgivings and errors. For what is it? Devolution is a delegation of powers. Some authority commits to another body certain of its powers, certain of its duties. In handing them over it makes such conditions as it pleases. Afterwards neither party has any cause for complaint so long as the conditions are observed. If the conditions are found to be too onerous when experience has tested them then, by agreement between the parties, the conditions may of course be revised. But revision may mean the end of the sytem, for alteration of conditions may mean the withdrawal of one or of both parties. The question which must here be asked is whether the conditions have in fact been too onerous. More than one answer may be given, and no doubt the Archbishops' Commission on Church and State to be appointed to consider all relevant matters will deliberately and judgmatically guide the Church along a path of sobriety and honour.

Although an answer cannot yet be given, we may still read the future in the light of the past. Devolution is the delegation of powers. Parliament gave certain powers to the Church Assembly. But obviously neither Parliament nor anybody else can confer power which itself does not possess. Even if it purport to do so, this delegation will assuredly sooner or later fail. Has Parliament any

ancient or constitutional right to alter the formularies of the Church of England? Some scholars and lawyers aver that it has; others as stoutly deny it, and number in their ranks the best constitutional historians. That is the issue. Either Parliament has not, or it has, this right. If it has not the right, how can it delegate it? If it has no such right, the Church Assembly as a body to whom powers are delegated cannot get that right from Parliament. From whom then can it get that power? It must have received it from the Convocations, or alternatively from the general assent of the Church people of England, in whom the power resides as a congregation of faithful people. Has either of these given these rights to the Church Assembly? Some may perhaps answer that both have.

Was, then, the procedure of altering the balance of the teaching of the Book of Common Prayer embodied in a measure of the Assembly and sent to Parliament a mistaken interpretation of the meaning of the Church of England Powers Act and all that it involves? Would other procedure have avoided a difference which was not unavoidable?

But on the other hand, Parliament may have the right to discuss the bearing and nature of changes in the liturgy of the Church of England. In a sense Parliament must always retain the right to intervene in everything. Let us take a crucial instance. Supposing the Church Assembly, or other competent body, proposed to adopt the service-books of the Church of Rome for public worship in church, would Parliament rightly refuse or intervene? Upon the answer to that question much

depends. If we think that Parliament had a right, then it was capable of devolving the right. Did it take a course which, if the premiss is sound, could effect such a delegation of power? Assuredly it did, subject to the conditions that it should say finally "Aye" or "No."

This question is not concerned so much with what is called the Establishment. If any other body of Christians proposed to effect a change, a revolution, a readjustment of basic formularies, the State must consider these proposals and give or withhold consent. If English Roman Catholics decided to adopt the Book of Common Prayer and their priests to be reconciled to the see of Canterbury, they would "go into the wilderness" and leave their property to alien hands, for they could not bring it with them without an Act of Parliament. But Parliament could approve, and could transfer the property if it were so moved. In other words there must be a final authority in this realm. Is it political, or ecclesiastical, or both?

These matters are not capable of hurried negotiation or settlement. But in time they are more or less easily capable of adjustment. And the future of the Church Assembly is not imperilled by the process of adjustment. After adjustment of conditions, the ordinary work of regulation of Church affairs and administration can best continue without let or hindrance under the control of the organisation which has proved its capacity.

There are, besides the constitutional issue, other questions which the Assembly must answer. The work and position of the Convocations must be again the subject of deliberation. The new men

will ask, as the old men have asked, the exact value of these ancient assemblies of the clergy. Are they of the *esse* of the Church? Have they constitutional powers, and a place in the realm, which they cannot transmit as a heritage to the Assembly? Cannot the Houses of Bishops and Clergy in the Church Assembly sitting apart from the Laity exercise all the functions and perform all the duties of Convocation? Cannot a succession of the ancient rights and powers of Convocation be secured to these houses of the Assembly? The debating of the same subject separately in four separate Houses of Convocation adds immensely to labour and diminishes greatly the effectiveness of debate. The clergy are those who chiefly feel the stress. To attend Assembly sessions is one thing, to serve on Assembly Committees is another thing; to respond to a summons to Convocation is a third thing, and to serve on Convocation Committees a fourth. It would not be unfair to say that the clergy treat these things strictly in that order of importance. So Assembly work is well done by the clergy, who feel it to be of sufficient moment to warrant their leaving their pastoral cures, and Convocation business is often but lightly esteemed and its sessions sparsely attended. If one day in each Assembly Session were allotted to Convocation business, to be transacted by the Houses of Bishops and Clergy, would any other change be needed? The House of Laity is urged by some of its members to seek sessions of its own for its own business, and perhaps its aspirations may be presently attained. This arrangement will be very easy when the new Church House is completed, for then all the Houses

will be able to be in session in different rooms at the same time, in close relationship and with all facilities for the strictest constitutional procedure. But this may prove to be impossible because of some rights of Convocation, preserved despite its long sleep from 1717 to 1852, and incapable of transfer to the Houses of Bishops and Clergy. But few would confess to-day that if a choice had to be made between the Assembly and the Convocations that the latter would receive the preference.

The future of the Assembly in all its undertakings is largely dependent upon the parochial clergy. There are happily now much brighter prospects of a close and friendly understanding between them. The misunderstanding which followed the early legislation, including the Dilapidations and the Pensions Measures, was very largely on one side. No one who has been intimately connected with the views of Assembly members can forget the searchings of heart in the House of Clergy when these measures went forward. The benefits of them are now in many places beginning to be felt, and by many men. Those benefits will increase in the future, and the power of the Assembly to carry amending measures and so to adapt the arrangements to changing needs will make them more than ever advantageous to the clergy and the Church.

The parochial clergy will presently, as we are confident, be assured of a certain and reasonable, if exiguous, stipend, a modest and sufficient pension, and, what they seek above all, a day's work of study, prayer and pastoral activity which may be regarded as a fit task for a man and a leader of men.

All these, and especially the latter, are more and more made possible by the Assembly's work.

So also the laity will find in the future, as in the last ten years, ever new fields for enterprise in the cause of religion, and will gain inspiration to the highest service for God and their fellow men in the loftier achievement made possible in the new order of things. Both from the clerical and from the lay standpoint the intimacy of the religious life is advanced by the new possibilities opening out as the old obstacles are removed, and the Church is made more and more fit to be the earthly embodiment of Christ, her Head.

The future of the financial work of the Assembly may, and probably will be, of great importance. The story of the ten years just passed is one of the gradual emergence of order out of financial chaos. But the disorder is still much in evidence. A co-ordinating authority is essential for the economical administration of the Church's resources, both endowed and voluntary. This is not to say that undisclosed scandals have to be made to cease. There are no financial scandals in the ordinary sense. But there is much overlapping, some spending of money upon objects in response to popular clamour and not enough of common prevision of future claims. The failure in the supply of ordinands, the lack of churches, the problems of schools and training colleges are all of them more serious than they need have been. History will repeat itself, unless more progress towards a general financial supervision is made possible.

There are some who say that the only real value of the Assembly is as a financial agent. That is an

exaggeration, but gives a ray of hope for future success. The danger to be avoided is an inelastic system which will kill initiative and damp enthusiasm. But behind all the efforts of the various Finance Boards, the Ecclesiastical Commission, the Church Societies, the Insurance System and any kind of business undertakings which may claim to belong to the Church, there should be a common purpose and a controlling intention evolved by a corporate mind. This can come through the Assembly. All the interests should be focussed upon a common policy, and the associated organisations should pursue it untiringly. But organisation must be elastic, utilise every possible agency and enlist the help of everyone. The insufficiency of finance in a single mode can be shown by the success of the " Sponsors " appeal for ordinands, which the quota system had failed lamentably to make or to pursue. The Assembly is strong in men of affairs, and experts in business and finance. The oversight of the Church's resources is an attractive task for men of great ability, and there can be little doubt that the Assembly has here a great and untilled field. The old method was to give all diocesan bishops a seat upon the boards or standing committees of societies or associations, and then to hide the head in the sand and dream that Church control was secured. But there are better ways of progress. That they will be worked out in this, or in the next generation, the achievements of the years since the Archbishops' Committee reported in 1909 have made certain.

The ultimate object is the common good of religion, and constructive minds must be given full

scope. The Reformation has left us too many records to prove how much easier it is to destroy than to construct. To repeat a policy of demolition would be to confess ourselves incapable of learning a lesson. So nothing shall be destroyed, save what is evil; the good energies of the Church should one and all be nourished and fostered. The Assembly has vast powers of creation, and it is in their exercise that the future will be found prolific.

The Bishop of St. Albans has in his essay set out clearly what he believes to be the way before the Assembly in the matter of oversea missions and relations. The future will bring here also order out of confusion, and in it the Assembly will assuredly play a great part. Much has been said and written about "the Church its own missionary society," but it may be doubted whether the phrase denotes a practical policy. The attitude of Parochial Church Councils is steadily moving in the direction of accepting their corporate responsibility for overseas work. The old stuffy atmosphere in which that responsibility was regarded as the freak notion of a cranky few is being swept by a strong breeze of purer air. Already the societies and associations are in closer connection with the Assembly and with one another. Further collaboration is easily possible, and the development of the Church's mission according to a settled plan is even now within reach. As administrative bodies the missionary societies will probably always be wanted. Any attempt to vary this would very likely result merely in the creation of another society, official and perhaps inelastic, while the old ones would still continue. But that the Assembly must

and will take a larger share in the organisation of missionary endeavour seems quite certain.

In the world of education, which has from the earliest days been occupied by the Church, it is difficult to foresee events. Is the dual system to be brought to an end before very long? Is a general Council of Education to be set up which would bring the influences of the Church to bear upon every kind of education and do for the stages above the primary what the National Society has done so well for that stage? Whatever the outcome of the present situation, which is very far from clear, it seems that the Assembly will have much to consider, to decide, to construct.

And then generally it would be well to turn back again to what the Archbishop says at the beginning of this book. Justification for the Assembly is to be found principally and chiefly in the general raising of the tone of spiritual life in the Church of England. It is difficult always to estimate spiritual influences, dangerous to assert that this or that is the result of anything save the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless work does kindle enthusiasm and enthusiasm will ever have great effect upon the soul. In so far as all that is already accomplished, all that is now projected, and all that the future shall make possible are undertaken with the ultimate object of ministering the Sacraments to the faithful, preaching the Gospel to them that are being lost, and inspiring to service, just so far will the Assembly find a future wherein the Churchmen of to-day, with their sons and their daughters, may be glad and rejoice.

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